



(1857)

THE
NIGHT SIDE OF LONDON.

BY
J. EWING RITCHIE,

AUTHOR OF "THE LONDON PULPIT," ETC.

"In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach.

* * *
I do confess them nurseries of the arts.

* * *
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst."

COWPER.

LONDON:
WILLIAM TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND.
MDCCCLVII.

TO

HENRY THOMPSON, ESQ., F.R.C.S., M.B.

DEAR THOMPSON,

I DEDICATE this book to you in testimony of a friendship begun in childhood, and not dead yet, though we both are men. I trust that you will find in it conclusions which your own knowledge of London life has suggested to your own mind. We live in an age eminently subjective, and the people who are the first to speak and the last to think will tell you this is a favourable sign. Whether it be so or not, I can-

DEDICATION.

not take upon myself to affirm; but if it be so, I have not gone far wrong. At any rate, to join your name with mine is a great pleasure to

Yours faithfully,

J. EWING RITCHIE.

Finchley Common,

March 19th, 1857.



THE
NIGHT SIDE OF LONDON.

INTRODUCTION.

It is said of a stranger who came to London for the first time, and took up his quarters in one of the most crowded city streets, that he remained standing at the door the whole of the first day of his London existence, because he waited until the crowd had gone. A man, says Max Schlesinger, who would do that, ought to rise and go to bed with the owl. The owl is the symbol of wisdom ; for once I would prevail upon the reader to do as the owls do, and become wise as they. You may live at Clapham all your life, come into the city every day, attend on a gospel ministry, as the slang phrase is,—for it is not only wicked people that talk slang,—and know no more of

London than the British public do of that Herat for which we are now plunged into war.

Think of what London is. At the last census there were 2,362,236 persons of both sexes in it; 1,106,558 males, of whom 146,449 were under 5 years of age; and 1,255,678 females, of whom 147,173 were under 5 years of age. The unmarried males were 670,380, ditto females 735,871; the married men were 399,098, the wives 409,731; the widowers were 37,080, the widows 110,076. On the night of the census there were 28,598 husbands whose wives were not with them, and 39,231 wives mourning their absent lords. Last year the number of children born in London was 86,833; in the same period 56,786 persons died. The Registrar General assumes that, with the additional births, and by the fact of soldiers and sailors returning from the seat of war, and of persons engaged in peaceful pursuits settling in the capital, sustenance, clothing, and house accommodation must now be found in London for about 60,000 inhabitants more than it contained at the end of 1855. Think of that—the population of a large city absorbed in London, and no perceptible inconvenience occasioned by it! Houses are still

to let ; there are still the usual tickets hung up in windows in quiet neighbourhoods, intimating that apartments furnished for the use of single gentlemen can be had within ; the country still supplies the town with meat and bread, and we hear of no starvation in consequence of deficient supply. London is the healthiest city in the world. During the last ten years the annual deaths have been on the average 25 to 1,000 of the population, in 1856 the proportion was 22 to 1000 ; yet, in spite of this, half of the deaths that happen on an average in London between the ages of 20 and 40 are from consumption and diseases of the respiratory organs. The Registrar traces this to the state of the streets. He says : “ There can be no doubt that the dirty dust suspended in the air that the people of London breathe often excites diseases of the respiratory organs. The dirt of the streets is produced and ground now by innumerable horses, omnibuses, and carriages, and then beat up in fine dust, which fills the mouth, and inevitably enters the air passages in large quantities. The dust is not removed every day, but, saturated with water in the great thoroughfares, sometimes ferments in damp weather, and at

other times ascends again under the heat of the summer sun as atmospheric dust."

London, says Henry Mayhew, may be safely asserted to be the most densely populated city in all the world; containing one-fourth more people than Pekin, and two-thirds more than Paris—more than twice as many as Constantinople—four times as many as St. Petersburg—five times as many as Vienna, or New York, or Madrid—nearly seven times as many as Berlin—eight times as many as Amsterdam—nine times as many as Rome—fifteen times as many as Copenhagen—and seventeen times as many as Stockholm. "London," says Horace Say, "*c'est une province couverte de maisons.*" It covers an area of 122 square miles in extent, or 78,029 statute acres; and contains 327,391 houses. Annually 4,000 new houses are in erection for upwards of 40,000 new-comers. The continuous line of buildings stretching from Holloway to Camberwell is said to be 12 miles long. It is computed if the buildings were set in a row they would reach across the whole of England and France, from York to the Pyrenees. London has 10,500 distinct streets, squares, circuses, crescents, terraces, villas, rows, buildings, places,

lanes, courts, alleys, mews, yards, rents. The paved streets of London, according to a return published in 1856, number over 5,000, and exceed 2000 miles in length; the cost of this paved roading was 14 millions, and the repairs cost £1,800,000 per annum. London contains 1,900 miles of gas pipes, with a capital of nearly £4,000,000 spent in the preparation of gas. The cost of gas-lighting is half a million. It has 360,000 lights; and 13,000,000 cubic feet of gas are burnt every night. Last year along these streets the enormous quantity of upwards of 80 millions of gallons of water rushed for the supply of the inhabitants, being nearly double what it was in 1845. Mr. Mayhew says, if the entire people of the capital were to be drawn up in marching order, two and two, the length of the great army of Londoners would be no less than 670 miles, and supposing them to move at the rate of three miles an hour, it would require more than nine days and nights for the average population to pass by. To accommodate this crowd, 125,000 vehicles pass through the thoroughfares in the course of 12 hours; 3,000 cabs, 1,000 omnibuses, 10,000 private and job carriages and carts, ply daily in the streets; 3,000 conveyances

enter the metropolis daily from the surrounding country.

Speaking generally, Tennyson tells us—

“ Every minute dies a man,
Every minute one is born.”

In London, Mr. Mayhew calculates, 169 people die daily, and a babe is born every five minutes. The number of persons, says the Registrar-General, who died in 1856, in 116 public institutions, such as workhouses and hospitals, was 10,381. It is really shocking to think, and a deep stigma on the people—or on the artificial arrangements of society, by which so much poverty is perpetuated—that nearly one person out of five, who died last year, closed his days under a roof provided by law or public charity. It is calculated 500 people are drowned in the Thames every year. In the first week of the present year there were five deaths from intemperance alone. How much wretchedness lies in these two facts—for the deaths from actual intemperance bear but a small proportion to the deaths induced by the immoderate use of intoxicating liquors; and of the 500 drowned, by far the larger class, we have every reason to believe, are of the number of whom Hood wrote—

“ Mad with life’s history,
Glad to death’s mystery
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world ! ”

A meeting has just been held of the unemployed, chiefly the carpenters, bricklayers, and bricklayers’ labourers of the metropolis, in which it was stated that their number—though very probably there may be some exaggeration here—is 35,000. If these men are married and have families, we get a further idea of the deep distress in this wealthy and luxurious capital,—this capital where the gold of Australia, the jewels of Golconda, the silks and spices of the East, come for sale, and are lavished as freely on the most questionable purposes and persons as on the noblest specimens of humanity and the most glorious objects for which men care to live. Then think of the inmates of the lunatic asylums, and the poor-houses, and the hospitals, in most cases sent there as the result of their own ignorance or imprudence. Add to these our prison population, and our criminal classes, and our prostitutes—and what a picture we get of the Night Side of London, of the classes whose existence is a reproach or a curse. In

London one man in every nine⁴ belongs to the criminal class.

According to the last reports, there were in London 143,000 vagrants admitted in one year into the casual wards of the workhouses.

Here we have always in our midst—

107 burglars.

110 housebreakers.

38 highway robbers.

773 pickpockets.

3,657 sneaks men or common thieves.

11 horse-stealers.

141 dog-stealers.

3 forgers.

28 coiners.

317 utterers of base coin.

141 swindlers.

182 cheats.

343 receivers of stolen goods.

2,768 habitual rioters.

1,205 vagrants.

50 begging-letter writers.

86 bearers of begging letters.

6,371 prostitutes, besides 470 not otherwise described, making altogether a total of 16,900 criminals known to the police. These persons

are known to make away with £42,000 per annum ; the prison population at any particular time is 6000, costing for the year £170,000. Our juvenile thieves cost us £300 a-piece.

Again, let us look at the classes whose labours and occupations and modes of life are inconsistent with health, or not favourable to any great development of moral principle. Almost 20,000 persons are engaged in Sunday trading ; the number of ragged children is nearly 30,000, the number of families living in one room is estimated as high as 150,000. It appears from a report by Mr. Goderich, officer of health in the parish of Kensington, that in a place called the Potteries there are 1,147 human beings and 1,041 pigs congregated within a space of less than nine acres, the present number of pigs being below the usual average. The dwellings of a large proportion of the inhabitants of this locality are mere hovels with shattered roofs and unglazed windows, the floor is below the level of the external soil, which has been raised by excessive accumulations of filth of all kinds, and the walls are at all times partially damp and giving out pestilential gases, intolerable to those who have not been born among them, fatal to the

health of those who have. Another portion of the miserable population has converted old caravan bodies, removed in some cases from their wheels, into houses; others have no other dwelling than ruinous post-chaise bodies, for which a rent of sixpence per week is paid. In one of the caravans eight persons dwell, among whom a child suffering from small-pox was battling with death at the time of Mr. Goderich's visit in March.

Mr. Timbs calculates the number of professional beggars in London at 35,000, two-thirds of whom are Irish. 30,000 men, women, and children are employed in the costermonger trade; besides, we have, according to Mr. Mayhew, 2,000 street sellers of green stuff, 4,000 street sellers of eatables and drinkables, 1,000 street sellers of stationery, 4,000 street sellers of other articles, whose receipts are 3 millions sterling, and whose incomes may be put down at one. Let us extend our survey, and we shall not wonder that the public-houses—and the gin palaces—and the casinos—and the theatres—and the penny gaffs—and the lowest and vilest places of resort in London, are full. In Spitalfields there are 70,000 weavers with but 10s. per week; there are 22,479 tailors, 30,805 shoemakers,

43,928 milliners ; seamstresses, 21,210 ; bonnet makers, 1,769 ; cap makers, 1,277. What hard, wretched work is theirs !

In the first week of January this present year, a poor woman named Martha Duke was brought up at the Thames police office, charged with attempting to commit suicide. She was a poor needle-woman, and found the misery of that mode of life greater than could be borne. Speaking not of this case in particular, but of needle-women in general, Mr. Burch, the resident medical officer of the London Hospital, stated that "a large number of patients had been under his care, and he had carefully investigated a considerable number of cases, and was satisfied that needle-women were the most ill-paid class of people and the most hard-working on earth. They were miserably paid," he added, "and he knew that numbers of them, with constitutions broken down, earned from 3s. to 4s. per week only, and for that scanty pittance were compelled to work from three o'clock in the morning till ten at night. They soon became enfeebled by insufficient diet and over-work, and when broken down either had recourse to suicide or prostitution." In 1844 the operative tailors instituted

an inquiry into the sweating system, and then it was found that there were at the West End 676 men, women, and children working under sweaters, and occupying 92 small rooms, the majority of which measured eight feet by ten. The sweater, it may be as well to state, is the man who contracts with the large houses to supply them with shirts, or clothes, or any other kind of slop work ; the more his victims sweat, the more are his gains. The sweater is often a Jew, never a Christian.

Let the reader walk with us to a fashionable clothing establishment—a mart, we believe, as it is called. The building, as you approach it, seems a palace. It is redolent with polished mahogany and plate-glass and gilt. You pass it when the lamps are lit, and you think of the Arabian Nights. It is illuminated as if peace had just been proclaimed, or some great national desire had been realised. You enter with cash, and all is fair and smooth within. Whatever you want in the way of apparel is there, and at a price for which no honest tradesman can afford to sell it. Honest ! asks the reader, is not the man honest ? Does he steal the cloth ? Certainly not. Does he not pay rent, and taxes,

and wages? Most certainly he does. Do not his creditors all get twenty shillings in the pound? Most undoubtedly they do; the law protects them, and with them the man, willing or not, must keep himself right. So far as they are concerned, honesty is the best policy. How, then, does he make his profit? How is this monster establishment maintained? Out of what fund is it that its glitter and glare are paid for? We shall now see. Come down this stinking court. Go up those creaking stairs. Enter that miserable garret. Look at those men, who know nothing of labour but its curse, and of life but its misery. Mark the haggard faces already stamped with the impress of death. If you can bear the polluted atmosphere, you will hear from these men how they toil from early morning far into the night for two shillings a day; how for them the fine air and the golden sunshine, and the rest of the sabbath, exist not; and it is by them, by their sweat and blood and sinew, that the profit is made. And now go back and look into the gilded shop, and it will seem to you a Golgotha—a place of skulls. Is another illustration needed? Up in yon miserable chamber, without fire—without food

—without furniture—almost without clothes, Martha Duke is stitching to earn the few pence by which she prolongs life, and its misery. Once, youth was hers, with its bright hopes and joys; but they are gone, and with an aching heart and pallid brow she plies her daily task. Is it wonderful that, wanting coals or something better than dry bread, the shirt or the waistcoat should be pawned? Is it not more wonderful that such bleak and hopeless poverty should be so honest as it is? And yet from such poor, forlorn, forgotten women as these, proceed the profits which pay for dazzling window and gorgeous pile.

Bear in mind also that corporal labourers are shorter lived and endure more physical evil than the mental labourers. The coal-whippers' work—the most wasteful, unscientific, and pernicious expenditure of human muscle ever devised, writes Dr. Chambers—overstrains the fibres of the heart, and the organs become diseased. Painters again are liable to palsy and colic, from the use of white lead. The tailor sits till the stomach and bowels become disordered, the spine twisted, the gait shambling, and the power of taking the exercise necessary to health obliterated.

ted. Shoemakers and bootmakers suffer equally from a constrained position and the pressure of the last against the stomach. Heart-burn and indigestion are so common among them, that a pill in the Pharmacopeia is called the cobbler's pill. Dressmakers are peculiarly subject to the attacks of consumption; workwomen constantly suffer from varicose veins.

There are two worlds in London, with a gulf between—the rich and the poor. We have glanced at the latter; for the sake of contrast let us look at the former. Emerson says the wealth of London determines prices all over the globe. In 1847 the money coined in the mint was £5,158,440 in gold, £125,730 in silver, and £8,960 in copper. The business of the Bank of England is conducted by about 800 clerks, whose salaries amount to about £190,000. The Bank in 1850 had about 20 millions of bank notes in circulation. In the same year there were about 5 millions deposited in the Savings Banks of the metropolis. The gross Customs revenue of the port of London in 1849 was £11,070,176. 65 millions is the estimate formed by Mr. M'Culloch of the total value of the produce conveyed into and from London. The gross rental as assessed

by the property and income tax is $12\frac{1}{2}$ millions. The gross property insured is £166,000,000, and only two-fifths of the houses are insured. The amount of capital at the command of the entire London bankers may be estimated at 64 millions; the insurance companies have always 10 millions of deposits ready for investment. 78 millions are employed in discounts. In 1841 the transactions of one London house amounted to 30 millions. In 1839 the payments made in the clearing house were 954 millions,—an enormous sum, which will appear still greater when we remember all sums under £100 are omitted from this statement. All this business cannot be carried on without a considerable amount of eating and drinking. The population consumes annually 277,000 bullocks, 30,000 calves, 1,480,000 sheep, 34,000 pigs, 1,600,000 quarters of wheat, 310,464,000 pounds of potatoes, 89,672,000 cabbages. Of fish the returns are almost incredible. Besides, it eats 2,742,000 fowls, 1,281,000 game. Exclusive of those brought from the different parts of the united kingdom, from 70 to 75 millions of eggs are annually imported into London from France and other countries. About 13,000 cows are kept in the city and its envi-

rons for the supply of milk and cream; and if we add to their value that of the cheese, and butter, and milk, brought from the country into the city, the expenditure on dairy produce must be enormous. Then London consumes 65,000 pipes of wine, 2,000,000 gallons of spirits, 43,200,000 gallons of porter and ale, and burns 3,000,000 tons of coal; and I have seen it estimated that one-fourth of the commerce of the nation is carried on in its port. On Boxing Night it was estimated that 60,000 persons visited the various theatres and places of amusement in London. In London in 1853, according to Sir R. Mayne, there were 3,613 beer shops, 5,279 public houses, 13 wine rooms. The theatres and saloons licensed by the Lord Chamberlain are, the Haymarket Theatre, Adelphi, Olympic, Princess's, Strand, Surrey, Queen's, Soho, City of London, Marylebone, Standard, Pavilion, Victoria, Sadler's Wells, St. James's, Lyceum, Astley's, Her Majesty's, Drury Lane, Grecian Saloon, Albert, Britannia, Bower, Earl of Effingham. Literary Institutions shut up. The Great Globe itself is a doubtful property. That beautiful building, the Panopticon in Leicester-square, was a failure, and the Adelaide Gallery has long

been closed. An attempt was made to form an educational association in Charing Cross, where, by means of a library and cheap lectures, the popular mind could be improved and instructed and amused, but the attempt did not succeed; dancing, drinking, theatrical representations,—most of them adaptations from the French,—music, are the only pleasures which a London population cares for. Even as in the old Hebrew days, Wisdom lifts up her voice in our streets, and no man regards her testimony.

And now to guard all this wealth, to preserve all this mass of industry honest, and to keep down all this crime, what have we? 6,367 police, costing £373,968, 13 police courts, costing £45,050, and about a dozen criminal prisons; 69 union relieving officers, 316 officers of local boards, and 1,256 other local officers. We have 35 weekly magazines, 9 daily newspapers, 5 evening, 72 weekly ones. Independently of the mechanics' institutions, colleges, and endowed schools, we have 14,000 children of both sexes clothed and educated gratis, and the National and British and Foreign Schools in all parts of London, and Sunday schools. We have Bartholomew's Hospital, relieving, in 1848, 71,573

patients ; Guy's Hospital, St. Thomas's, St. George's, the Middlesex, the London, the King's College, the University College, and many more ; then there are Bedlam, the Foundling Hospital, the Philanthropic Institution, the Magdalen, London has 50 medical charities for special purposes, with a total income of £96,664 ; 35 general dispensaries, £14,424 ; 12 societies for the reformation of life and public morals, £11,583 ; 18 for reclaiming the fallen, and staying the progress of crime, £35,036 ; 14 for the relief of general destitution and distress, with £23,880 ; 12 for the relief of specified distress, with £29,881 ; 14 for aiding the resources of the industrious, with £7,246 ; 11 for the blind, deaf, and dumb, with £34,762 ; 103 colleges, hospitals, and other asylums for the aged (exclusive of Chelsea and Greenwich Hospitals, £83,047) ; 16 charitable pension societies, with £18,989 ; 74 charitable and provident societies, chiefly for specified classes, with £103,227 ; 31 asylums for orphans and other necessitous children, with £81,015 ; 10 educational foundations, exclusive of libraries, modern colleges, or proprietary schools, £93,112 ; 4 charitable ditto, with £13,300 ; 40 school societies, religious book,

church-aiding, and Christian instructing, irrespective of government grants or establishments, with an income, taking the sale of publications, as much as £318,189. Mr. Low gives the total number of charitable institutions as 500; Mr. Mayhew puts down their number as 530. Then there are 100 temperance meetings held weekly. May we not hope that all these institutions have some effect, that by means of them some are reclaimed, and many saved?

The more direct religious agency may be estimated as follows. In the Handbook to Places of Worship, published by Low, in 1851, there is a list of 371 churches and chapels in connexion with the Establishment; the number of church sittings, according to Mr. Mann, is 409,184; the Independents have about 140 places of worship and 100,436 sittings; the Baptists, 130 chapels, and accommodation for 54,234; the Methodists, 154 chapels, 60,696; the Presbyterians, 23 chapels and 18,211 sittings; the Unitarians, 9 chapels and about 3,300 sittings; the Roman Catholics, 35 chapels and 35,994 sittings; 4 Quaker chapels, with sittings for 3,151; the Moravians have 2 chapels, with 1,100 sittings; the Jews have 11 synagogues and 3,692 sittings. There

are 94 chapels belonging to the New Church, the Plymouth Brethren, the Irvingites, the Latter-Day Saints, Sandemanians, Lutherans, French Protestants, Greeks, Germans, Italians; which chapels have sittings for 18,833. We thus get 691,723 attendants on divine exercises.

Those who know London life will know that I have not glanced at its darkest side: any man of the world will tell you infamies which I may not name here. I do not go so far as Mr. Patmore, and affirm that in the higher ranks of life a young man is obliged to keep a mistress to avoid being laughed at; but I can conceive of no city more sunk in licentiousness and rascality than ours. Paris, Hamburgh, Vienna may be as bad, but they cannot be worse. The poor are looked after by the police—visited by the city missionary; their wants and woes are worked up into newspaper articles, and they live as it were in houses of glass. It is true that one half the world does not know how the other half lives; but it is not true in the sense in which it is generally affirmed. Who ever has an idea that a pious baronet, taking the chair at a religious meeting in Exeter Hall, will prove a felon; that that house, eminent in the mercantile and philanthropic world, will sanction the

circulation of forged Dock warrants ; that that manager, about to engage in prayer at a meeting of directors, will turn out to be the manager of the greatest swindle of modern times. Who sees a dishonoured suicide in the patriotic Sadleir, or in the philanthropic Redpath a convict for life, or in the dashing Robson a maniac. If I tell you that respectable old gentleman now coming out of his club is going to inspect a fresh victim, whom some procuress has lured with devilish art, you will tell me that I am uncharitable ; or if I point you to that well-appointed equipage in the Park, and tell you that that fair young girl that sits within has crushed many a young wife's heart, and has sent many a man to the devil before his time, you will tell me I exaggerate ; I do nothing of the kind. If I were to tell what most men know—what every one knows, except those whose business it is to know it, and to seek to reform it, I should be charged with indelicacy, as if truth could be indelicate, and my book perhaps suppressed by the Society for the Suppression of Vice—if that abortion exists still. We are choked up with cant ; almost everything we believe in is a lie. The prayer of Ajax should be ours,—Light—more light.

What are we to do ?—to stand stock still,

looking to heaven "with a frenzied air, as if to ask if a God were there?" One can almost believe, with George Gilfillan, that the earth needs a new gospel and a new manifestation of divine power. From this low estate who is to rescue us? Not the aristocracy, a barbarous institution, perpetuating barbarous ideas in our midst, — that work is not honourable; whereas all true civilization points us to the fact, that man is only happy and virtuous as he is steadily industrious; and thus our most uncivilized classes are our upper and lower, — our lords and ladies on one side, and our rogues and prostitutes on the other. Not our law-makers, who imprison our young lads in costly jails, where the criminals have luxuries denied to the poor; and then in Newgate, or at the public works, mix them all up together, that the comparatively innocent may learn to be adepts in crime. Not our religious, I fear, when, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to Dr. Cumming, the cry is, If you have a proper translation of the Bible you will destroy the faith of the people. Not our trading classes, becoming richer and more sunk in flunkeyism every day. But it may be that these—

“Are graves from which a glorious phantom may
Burst to illuminate our tempestuous day.”

Whom am I to blame? Not the victims, but the fathers, and mothers, and divines, and schoolmasters, and governing classes. Father, you have given your bold, manly son an emasculated religion,—a religion that wilfully shuts its eyes, and will not look upon life as it is; and, immediately he goes into the world, away vanish all the pasteboard defences with which you childishly sought to guard him; and yet you will not confess that in inculcating religious creeds,—that in teaching children catechisms,—that in vaguely telling them to be good,—that in leading them to believe in forms rather than truths, you are only damming up for a while the passionate impulses of young blood, that they may ultimately exert a more tumultuous and irresistible sway. You take the little Arab of the streets, and, for acts of levity and wantonness which all boys commit, you send him to prison, at an age when you confess he is not a responsible creature, and then idiotically wonder that he turns out a criminal, and that he wars with society till he is hanged. You are surprised that woman, fond of praise, of dress, and pleasure,

should prefer to walk the street in silk and satins, to have a short life and a merry one, rather than slave and drudge, and end her days after all in a workhouse. You tone down your fashionably educated daughters into automatons, and then wonder that hot youth finds domestic life tame and dull. Above all, do not go away with the idea that we have reached the utmost height of civilization,—that we are a model people,—that it is our mission to set up as teachers of religion to all mankind. Let us remember that the increase of crime and dissipation are facts; that there can be no corrupter city than London, and that it must be so, so long as we make professions our practice so scandalously denies. I have seen Her Majesty's proclamation against vice and immorality read at quarter-sessions by men in whose reading it became a farce which the most ignorant bumpkin in court could relish. I ask, then, if this is the way seriously to set about moral reform. Routine and officialism in church and state have made the outside of the sepulchre white enough; do we not need a little cleansing within?

SEEING A MAN HANGED.

I AM not about to give an opinion as to the propriety or impropriety of capital punishments. On this point good men have differed, and will differ, I dare say, for some time to come. What I wish to impress upon the philanthropic or Christian reader is the horrible nature and atrocious effect of a public execution.

A few Sunday evenings since I was passing by Newgate, along the outside of which a considerable crowd had been collected. Respectable mechanics, with their wives and children, were staring at its dreary stone walls. Ragged boys and girls were romping and laughing in the streets. All the neighbouring public-houses were filled with a tipsy crowd. Here and there a few barriers had been erected, and workmen were engaged in putting up more. Why were these preparations made? For what purpose had this crowd collected? A man was to be hung, was the reply. I resolved for once to see the tragedy performed. To me or the living mass

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around, that man was an utter stranger. I had never seen him or heard the sound of his voice; all I knew was that he had led an outlaw's life, and was to die as outlaws oftentimes do. How strange the mysterious interest with which death clothes everything it touches! Is it that looking at a man so soon to have done with life we fancy we can better pry into the great secret? Do we deem that seeing him struggle we shall die more manfully ourselves, or is it merely the vague interest with which we regard any one about to travel into distant regions, all unknown to him or us, and the secrets of which he can never return to tell? Be this as it may, I went back at twelve. The public-houses had been closed, decent people had gone home to bed; but already the crowd had become denser, already had the thief and the bully from all the slums and stews of the metropolis been collected together. You can easily recognise the criminal population of our capital. The policeman knows them instinctively, as with their small wiry figures, restless eyes, and pale faces, they pass him by. One can tell them as easily as one knows the child of Norman origin by his noble bearing, or the Anglo-Saxon by his blue eyes

and rosy cheeks. There is generally something fine, and genial, and hearty about an English mob. On the night of the peace-rejoicing you might have taken a lady from one end of London to the other, and she would not have heard an objectionable word, or been inconvenienced in the least; but the mob of which I now write seemed utterly repulsive and reprobate; all its sympathies seemed perverted. It is a hard world this, I know, and it has but little mercy for the erring and the unfortunate; but that they should regard it with such evil eyes, that they should be so completely estranged from all its recognised modes of thought and action, that it should seem to them such a complete curse, was what I was not prepared to expect. It really made one's blood run cold to hear the mob around me talk. The man to be hung had rushed into a jeweller's shop as it was being closed, beaten the shopman, who tried to defend his master's property, with a life-preserver, and then left him for dead. But he had not said one word about his accomplices, and the crowd evidently admired him rather than not. "The ticket-of-leave man was out on starvation," as one of them informed me. "The Government,"

I drop the expressive adjective by which the noun was prefixed, "dodges him, and if he steals it is only what he must do, and if murder follows it is not his fault, and Government is unjust in hanging him for it." Such was the popular notion of the subject in my immediate neighbourhood. Government seemed to have planned the opportunity for the holders of such opinions to ventilate them. Till eight o'clock these men were to be formed into one compact mass; and how were they to pass their time if they did not talk? and here who was there to lift up his voice on behalf of law and order? and if there were such, who would have listened? Realise the state of the case. Look around! Where do you see the clear front and unabashed presence of honesty and virtue? The virtuous and the honest have long been in bed. Here there is a fight. That bundle of rags, with matted hair covering all the face so that you cannot clearly see a feature, is the Clare Market Pet, and she has just encountered Slashing Sal, between whom and herself there has been mortal enmity for years. Both women—yes, they are women, nor so fallen are they but that the temperance agent or the city missionary may yet lead them

to a diviner life, and *He* may smile on them who never yet turned away repentant son or daughter of sin and shame—are very tipsy, very dirty, and very red. Shrieking and cursing, the Clare Market Pet rushes on Slashing Sal, who is by no means loth for the encounter. A ring is formed, men and boys halloo and encourage, and the battle rages furiously, though both women are far too drunk to do each other any serious harm. At length the Clare Market Pet is vanquished and order is restored, just as we are told tranquillity reigns at Naples. “Please give me a penny,” says a girl of about fourteen, and I find myself in the midst of a group of youthful costermongers and their wives, who have come here for a lark, just as they frequent the penny gaff, or crowd the gallery in the Victoria. I listen to their slang till I feel sick, as I think for what a future of crime and its result they are now rapidly ripening. In this Christian land can no agency be formed that shall save these young heathens? Again, I find a female standing by my side; she is horridly dirty; she stinks of gin; her face is that of the confirmed sot—of one who has given up home and husband, and comfort, and decency, for the accursed

drink. She looks very piteously in my face. "And so they are going to hang the poor man," she exclaims; "they have no mercy on him." "You forget," I reply, "the poor man whom he murdered, and on whom he had no mercy." "No I do n't," she exclaims with tipsy gravity; "he had no right to kill the man, and ought to be punished; but ain't we all morally bad?"—but here the conversation ends, for she has sunk down, maudlin, stinking with gin, and overcome by it and weariness, on the doorstep. Ah, these doorsteps, let us look at them. To-night the police do n't bid the *habitués* move on. What crowds are collected on them,—ragged boys, who, perhaps, have nowhere else to sleep, wild-looking women unbonnetted and shoeless, with red, uncombed hair, faces very much marked with the small-pox, only seen on such occasions as these—old men crouch on them for whom home has no charm, and life no lustre, and girls whose rouged cheeks and shabby finery tell to what wretchedness and degradation, though young in years, they have already come. Let them sleep on, if they can, on their stony mattress, beneath this inclement sky, out in this cold December night; they are happier now than they can be

in their waking hours ! But look at the windows, all lighted up and filled with gay company. Those two beautiful girls—let us hope they are not ladies—not English mothers or wives—who have just stepped out of the brougham, and are now gazing from a first-floor on the wild human sea beneath, will sit playing cards and drinking champagne all night ; yet scarce have the sounds of Sabbath bells died away, and in a few hours a man is to be hung, and these girls, all sensibility and tears, will sit with their opera glasses during the fearful agony, as if merely Grisi acted or Mario sang.

Let us take another stroll through this living mass. The workmen have put up the last barriers—the clock strikes three—a crowd, dense and eager, has planted itself by the Old Bailey. The yard is thrown open, and three strong horses, such as you see in brewers' drays, drag along what seems to be an immense clumsy black box. It stops at the door of Newgate nearest to St. Sepulchre's. Women shriek as it rumbles over the stones, and you shudder, for instinctively you guess it is the gallows. By the dim gas-light you see workmen first fix securely a stout timber—then another—and then a beam

across from which hangs a chain—and now the crowd becomes denser. Let us leave it and enter the house, at the top of which we have previously engaged a seat.

We are some eight or nine in a very small room, and most of us are amateurs in hanging, and it seems to us a very pleasant show. Some of us have come a long way, and most of us have been up all night. We have seen every execution for the last ten years, and boast how on one day we saw one man hung at Newgate, and took a cab and got to Horsemonger-lane in time to see another. A rare feat that, and one of which we are justly proud. We talk of these things, and how we have seen criminals die, till some of us get very angry, and flatly contradict each other. Altogether there is somewhat too much mirth in the house, though we could not have had a better place had we paid £5 for it. The women are too exuberant and full of fun. It is true, as the girls say to each other, “they don’t hang a man every day,” but the gaiety is discordant. Over the way *he* is just waking up from his troubled sleep. A thin waif of smoke goes up from the dark dreary building opposite—are they boiling him his last cup of tea?

See, there is a light in the press-room! Ah, what are they doing there? St. Sepulchre's strikes six. The door at the foot of the scaffold opens, and very stealthily, and so as to be seen by none but such as are high up like ourselves, a man throws sawdust on the scaffold, and disappears again; we see him this time with a chain or rope. All this while the hydra-headed mob beneath amuses itself in various ways. It sings songs, chiefly preferring those with a chorus—it hoots dogs—it tosses small boys about on its top. As we look from the window, we think we never saw such a mob before. Far as the eye can reach towards Ludgate-hill on one side, and Giltspur-street on the other, it is one mass of human heads; the very air is tainted with their odour—we smell it where we are. Our amateur friends are in excellent spirits; they have not seen so many people at an execution for some years. They are agreeably surprised; they all thought the man would not have been hung, and had backed their opinions by bets.

A long wearisome night was it, even to us—and it is not yet eight. The roar of the crowd is so great—can *he* hear it within?—that we cannot catch the sound of the neighbouring

chimes ; but we see signs that the end is approaching. The police have filled up the intervening space between the scaffold and the crowd. A bell tinkles dismally, horridly. We look beyond the scaffold down into the open doorway, and there they are, ascending the stairs. First the chaplain, then the criminal, and then Jack Ketch. Marley walks steadily, with pale face and eyes cast down, and places himself immediately under the rope. He trembles slightly as his legs are being fastened, his hands had already been pinioned behind. A nightcap is drawn over his face, the rope is adjusted round his neck, Jack Ketch hastens down the ladder, the chaplain, reading the burial service all the while, steps back, down goes the drop, a woman or two shrieks, there is a slight convulsive movement of the body, and what was a minute back a living man is now a dishonoured corpse. There he dangles in the cold north wind for an hour. We cannot get away, as the crowd is determined to see the last of it, and will not move. It stops to hoot Jack Ketch, as he comes to cut Marley down at nine o'clock. Till then, there he hangs, a tall, well-made man, with fine dark whiskers, in his very prime, heedless of the sixty thousand

glaring eyes all round, with hands clasped as if supplicating that divine mercy which all born of woman need, and which may God grant us in our dying hour. Away hastes the crowd to its business or its pleasure; and when a short time after I pass by the very spot where that hideous throng had stood, blaspheming in the very presence of death, butchers' and carriers' carts filled up the vacant space, and the past night seemed a ghastly dream.

CATHERINE-STREET,

STRAND, is a busy place by day-time (it does a great business in the newspaper line, and about four or five in the afternoon it is used by the acute newsboys of the metropolis as a kind of Change), but it is busier far by night, and the later is the hour the more active and lively it grows. As you walk along the Strand any time in the afternoon and evening, have you not seen (to our shame be it said) a sight not visible in the chief thoroughfare of any other capital in Europe? The sight I allude to is that of girls, whose profession is but too evident from their appearance, stopping almost every man they meet, mildly, perhaps, in the early part of the evening—but, under the influence of drink, with greater rudeness and freedom as the night wears on. These girls, as you observe, are dressed in finery hired for the purpose; and following them, as a hawk its prey, you will perceive at a respectful distance old hags, always Jewesses,

whose business it is to see that these girls do not escape with their fine dresses, and that they are active in their efforts to entrap young men void of understanding. Well, these women all live in the neighbourhood of Catherine-street. What a filthy trade the Jews and Jewesses of London drive! You may go into Elysiums, and wine-rooms, and saloons, in this district, and you will find them belonging to Jews—the waiters Jews—the wine, the women, the cigars, all in the hands of Jews,—true to their ancient vocation of “spoiling the Egyptians.” Let me not be understood as joining in vulgar prejudices against the Jews. Without reading “Coningsby,” or “Lord George Bentinck, a Political Biography,” I am ready to confess that there have been, and still are, great and gifted men born to the Jewish race; but I am speaking of the vile crew who earn an infamous livelihood by pandering to all that is degraded in man or woman—whose vulture eyes follow you up and down Catherine-street, and who, if they could, would rob you of your last farthing, and tear off from your back its last rag, and who by fair means or foul rear up prostitutes, and trade in flesh and blood. But pardon the digression, and yet not exactly

is the subject a digression, when we remember Catherine-street and its neighbouring courts would be a very different locality had not the Jews selected it as a fitting place for operation. In the days Consule Plancio, as Mr. Thackeray would write, in the hot youth of the Regency, before George IV. had become prematurely used up, and a moral people had erected a statue to the memory of the most dissolute king in Christendom as a lesson for England's ingenuous youth and as an example for future royal princes, Catherine-street was gay indeed, if wine and profligacy in their lowest and worst reality of forms are ever gay. There was Mother H.'s, where bucks assembled, and reckless women danced and drank for a few short years ere they died wretchedly in parish poor-houses, or sought oblivion and repose in the dark waters of the neighbouring Thames. Up and down Catherine-street what wretchedness masked in smiles has walked—what sin in satin—what devilish craft and brutal lust, aye, and, what is worse than all, what unavailing repentance and regret!

A very fleeting population is that of Catherine-street. These women, commencing their life at eighteen, are few of them supposed to last more

than eight years ; and if you see them in the day-time, before they are painted and dressed up—with their red eyes and bloated faces, you will think few of them will last even that short time ; but they pass on one by one to the spirit land, not as did Antigone, conscious of duty done, though wailing her unwedded state, nor as Jephthah's high-souled daughter, for whom Hebrew maidens devoutly wept—but with body and soul alike loathsome and steeped in sin. Here in Catherine-street vice is a monster of a hideous mien. The gay women, as they are termed, are worse off than American slaves, and the men at the best are but drunken fools frittering away time and money and health, and rooting out from their hearts all trace of the divine that may be yet lingering there. The West is the more fashionable quarter, and the glory of Catherine-street is fled. Almost every house you come to is a public-house, or something worse. Here there is a free-and-easy after the theatres are over ; there a lounge open all night for the entertainment of bullies and prostitutes, and pick-pockets and thieves, greenhorns from the country or London-born ; here a dancing saloon, which we are told in the advertisement no visitor

should leave London without first seeing, and there a coffee-house where, when expelled from gayer places of resort, half intoxicated men and women take an early breakfast. All round you are bitter memories. Every stone you tread is red with blood; you can almost hear the last dying shriek of virtue, before, by means of the tempting purse or the hocused draught, the poor victim—feebler in her struggles every hour—be lost for ever. Yet the gas burns brightly by night, and there is dancing, and wine, and songs, and in the small hours you may hear a hollow laughter, sadder even than cries and tears. Think what years and years of tedious culture must have elapsed to produce this concentrated essence of vice. How many must have died in the seasoning—how many must have turned back shuddering as they saw the dark ending to their infatuated career—how many weeping parents must have won back to decency and the observance of moral and social law—how many the want of pecuniary means must have compelled into a reluctant abstinence! Such a crop could only be reared in such a Sodom and Gomorrha as ours. That landlord, gloating over his ill-gotten gains, could not have sunk into so fallen

a condition rapidly. It has taken years to make him what he is. There is no excuse for him, and he knows it. It is not for the honest refreshment of the weary or the *bonâ fide* accommodation of the public that his house is open. The real public have been in bed for hours. These men around us are here for immoral purposes. These women are on the same bad errand, and that they may better pursue their vocation here they come and drink; but he sells his poison, thinking not of the mischief it will do, but of the gain it will bring. Is he not a degraded man, with his double chin, and dirty face, and low forehead? can you see in him one trace of benevolence or humanity? Do you doubt this?—spend your last farthing in his bar, pawn every article of clothing you have, and go with an empty pocket and in rags, and you will soon be ordered to the door. You see he is now turning out that wretched creature. He has allowed her to drink till she has no more money; but she solicited chance customers, and they treated her to gin, and so the landlord let her stop; but now she is so drunk as to interfere with his business, and he turns her houseless and friendless out into the streets. Let us watch her. She

is too far gone to have any decency left. Drink and sadness combined have tortured her brain to madness. Her curses fill the air; a crowd collects; the police come up; she is borne on a stretcher to Bow-street, and in the morning is dismissed with a reprimand, or sentenced to a month's imprisonment, as the sitting magistrate is in a good temper or the reverse. The longer we stop here the more of such scenes shall we see, for with such publicans and sinners Catherine-street abounds. I have known life lost here in these midnight brawls; yet by day it has a dull and decent appearance, and little would the passing stranger guess all its revelations of sorrow and of crime.

THE BAL MASQUE,

IN foreign lands, we are told, is something refined and delicate. I have been to some abroad which certainly were nothing of the kind ; but in England, or rather in London, they are low, blackguard places, whether in the Holborn Casino, or Covent Garden, or the Grecian Saloon, or Vauxhall, or at Drury-lane. I have seen the French men and women at Vauxhall, and if they do in Paris what they do there—why, then I doubt somewhat of the superiority even of French Bal Masqués. But in England a public Bal Masqué is a disgusting exhibition, to enjoy which every moral sense must be deadened, and then a man must be drunk and have his pockets well lined. The rustic flower-girls and simple hay-makers with whom you dance will drink champagne as if it were ginger-beer, and consume all the delicacies of the season as if they cost no more than bacon and beans.

The fun, as it is termed, generally commences

about 11 P.M., by an immense mob of costermongers, tag, rag, and bob-tail, forming themselves in a row under the *surveillance* of the police, to watch and criticise the appearance of the maskers, and specially to regale themselves with jokes should any unfortunate do the economical and arrive on foot. I hear people say they like London—they can do anything they like without being observed. I doubt that much. I advise the strong-minded female who tells me that to walk down Cheapside in a Bloomer costume, and I will warrant she will have as great a mob accompanying her as followed Kossuth or any other hero to Guildhall. But to return to the Bal Masqué. I presume the company are arriving and the little boys are cheering, as only little boys can, right under cab wheels and in between the horses' legs. Some of the company, to borrow an ancient witticism, go disguised as gentlemen—some buy a mask at the door for fourpence—others delight in monstrous noses and fearful moustache—others, especially those who have fancy dresses, appear as Charles II.s, Cardinal Wolseys, Shakspeares, Henry VIII.s, Scotch Highlanders, Australian Diggers, Monks; and look far better when they enter than they

do when they make their exit in the early light of a summer morning. The same remark holds true of their female companions, who are mostly the same ladies that you meet in Regent-street in the afternoon, or hanging about the Haymarket all night, a class at no time remarkable for modesty, but whom we shall see in the course of the evening becoming bold and brazen-faced with excitement and wine. But the theatre is full—the guests are met—the band is assembled—the leader wields the baton—the sparkling chandeliers give a lustre to the scene, and away they bound to the music, whilst from the boxes and the gallery admiring crowds look down. Yes, there is a wild excitement in the hour, which stirs even the pulses of old blood. The women, as *debardeurs*, flower girls, sailor boys—many of them with faces fitting them for diviner lives, look beautiful even in their degradation and shame. Horace tells us wherever we go black care gets up and rides behind. Is it so? Can there be sad hearts beneath those gay exteriors? Do those cheeks flushed and radiant eyes indicate that they belong to those whom all moralists have held infamous, all religions condemned, and whose existence our modern civili-

sation perpetuates and deploras? Is man an immortal being, sent here for awhile to triumph over fleshly lusts and passions, to learn to trample as dross on the vanities of earth, and to set his affections on things above? Is it true that the most successful votaries of pleasure, from kingly Solomon to lordly Byron, have borne the same testimony to them, that they are not worth the gathering, that they are but as apples gathered by the shore of the Dead Sea, fair to the eye but deadly to the taste, and that in no way can they answer the need and aspirations of the heart of man, which is greater and grander than them all? Have we paid ministers of religion, bishops and archbishops, millions and millions of pounds to teach men these few self-evident truths, and yet do such orgies as those of which we write not merely exist but flourish, as if we had accepted the creed of the Atheist,—“Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die”? To-morrow! who around us now thinks of to-morrow? Not the young rake chaffing and dancing before us, whose mirth is the delirium of forgetfulness and the intoxication of wine, whose to-morrow is Whitecross-street Prison or the Insolvent Debtors’ Court. Not that brazen-faced woman now arrayed in splendour, and sur-

rounded by her admirers, whose to-morrow is old age, neglect, and a garret. Not those grey-headed gouty old sinners in the boxes, who have not the excuse of youth for the follies with which they desecrate old age. And certainly not that pale clerk, who has most probably embezzled his employer's money, and who is frantically exclaiming, "Waiter, another bottle of champagne," as he tells the women of his lot that he feels "a cup too low." You say he has them to cheer him. Yes, till his money is gone. When he is at Bow-street, as assuredly he will soon be, I promise you they will not be the last to give evidence as to his possession of funds, or the manner of his spending them. There may be honour among thieves, there is none among women when they have once lost their own.

Still gaily goes on the dancing. Then there is supper and wine—and more dancing, and more music, and more wine. The reporters for the papers generally leave about supper-time, and state that the gaieties were prolonged till a late hour; it is well they do this. In the earlier part of the evening the rioting and chaffing is somewhat of the coarsest, and the wit somewhat of the poorest; and the later it grows, and the more potent is the vinous

influence, the less select, or rather the more obscene, is the phraseology. In the wild saturnalia that ensues, all the restraints of decency and habit are thrown on one side. It is time to close, and the conductor sees this. Already Henry VIII. is right royally drunk, and Cardinal Wolsey is uttering flat blasphemy, and one monk has got a black eye, another a bloody nose. Unless, as in the case of Covent Garden, the theatre is burned down, and the proceedings are abruptly terminated, there is a final dance,—a patriotic rendering of the national anthem,—and into the air walk, or rather tumble, the debauchees, some to go home quietly to bed, others to keep it up in the nearest coffee-houses and public-houses; and handmaidens rising early to take in the milk in various parts of the metropolis are astonished by the exceedingly unsteady gait and singular costumes of various dismal gents, who have, if they are not absolute fools, sworn that it will be a long time before they go to another masqué bal. Such, I believe, is the general conclusion, the only exceptions being the costumier who provides the dresses, generally a Jew, and the bigger Jew who furnishes the wine.

UP THE HAYMARKET.

IF I take up the reports of our various religious societies, I find we are spending an enormous sum in sending the Gospel into foreign parts. I don't say but what this is praiseworthy—Indians, Turks, Jews, Assyrians, bond and free, are they not all children of one common Father with ourselves?—but let us not overlook after all the claims of home. I do not speak now of the lowest classes, of the refuse and outcasts of our towns, of the Pariahs of our civilization ; I speak of the heathens in satin and broadcloth, of the vice that wears patent leather boots and the best French kid, of the intemperance that feasts at rich men's tables, and that is born of hock, and claret, and champagne.

But what has all this to do with the Haymarket? Wait awhile, and your curiosity will be satisfied. It is day-time, and we will stroll up thither. There is nothing peculiar about the place, except the unusual number of gin-palaces,

hotels, French restaurants, oyster-shops, coffee-houses with the blinds drawn, as if to show they did not care to do business, and the general sleepy appearance of the waiters. There is a cab-stand seemingly inclined to shut up shop, and if it were not for the omnibuses there would be but few indications of life. On the right hand side as you go from Pall Mall there are most respectable shops, but the wonder to me is how they manage to attract custom sufficient to enable them to pay what must be their very heavy rents. At the top of the Haymarket we find the street from Leicester-square to Piccadilly always full of traffic, and just opposite we come to a shabby street called Windmill-street, quiet enough now, but at the witching hour of night destined to be filled to suffocation with fast men and flash women, with cabs and carriages, with old hags with fruit and flowers, male vendors of pencils and knives, policemen and bullies, fools and rogues. Let us skip over a short interval of time, and suppose the neighbouring church bells to have chimed the midnight hour. A few steps take us to Windmill-street. We take our stand with a crowd just opposite a building with an entrance lighted with gas, which we learn to

be the Argyll-rooms, *alias* a handsome casino—the handsomest in London—devoted to dancing and drinking. The hour of closing has arrived, and the votaries of pleasure, as it is called, are leaving. There are an immense number of women all splendidly dressed—from the young girl who has not yet learnt the bitterness of the life she has ventured on, to the woman thoroughly dead to all feeling, all modesty, and shame. It is a sad sight, though few see the snake in the grass for the flowers; and of the gay ones there none think they will ever become like the bloated, ragged women now standing in their path and asking with the true professional whine for alms. Some are borne away in broughams, some in cabs, but the most on foot. Let us now look at the men. You cannot see a finer set anywhere. Are not the flower of our youth and manhood there? Of course I refer merely to their physical formation. Young fellows from the army and navy, men from all our universities and inns of court, gents from the city and the Stock Exchange, and respectable middle-aged country gentlemen stopping in town a night, and just dropping in to see what is going on. Before us there is enough material to found a

mighty empire, including even that pale melancholy little lordling dashing along in his cab, who has already, boy as he is, a regiment; and all this multitude is going headlong to the devil at express speed, in spite of the baptismal vow and the ministrations of the church. But let us see what they are about. Here a portion seeks supper at the neighbouring oyster-rooms, and a rush is made at the waiters as they bring in oysters and pale ale, as if the parties had been famishing all day. Then we knock at the door of a place at one time much patronised by a certain marquis, and still bearing his name; and we find some that we saw leaving the Argyll here drinking; or we go into another, where the crowd is so dense we have scarce room to stand, and find the same occupation vigorously carried on. Of course at the places which do not have closed doors the bars are all filled, and drinking seems the order of the night. In the meanwhile let us march up Piccadilly. The small hours have now come, yet the place is redolent with life. Young fellows are singing "We won't go home till morning"—policemen are bidding the unfortunates that won't fee them move on—hideous females are waiting to rob the drunkards

they may meet in their path—and men with hawk eyes and hungry aspect are hovering all round like so many birds of prey ; and boys—for they are everywhere all dirt and rags, yet happy in the richness of young life, for childhood, even the most abandoned, can never be sad—dance round us, in the hope that “ your honour ” will find a copper for “ poor little Jack,” singing to us of that far-famed Ratcatcher’s Daughter, who

“ Did n’t live in Vestministere,
But the t’other side of the vatare.”

Well, I’d rather be one of them than the proprietress of yon house, with the gas lamp over the door, who by this time has been borne by the Great Northern in a first-class carriage, side by side with senators, and city magistrates, and clergymen, and it may be your wife or mine, to her country seat. We are standing in the very temple of vice—its ministers are all round us. Not one unholy appetite but can be gratified here ; gamblers, blacklegs, prostitutes, surround us on every side. Here law, and order, and decency are alike all violated. If it be in the prohibited hours, we can go into coffee-houses and

get as much brandy as we like, which of course is easily removed when the signal is made that the inspector is coming, and is again brought out when he is gone. But let us knock at this door; the glare of gas indicates that there is something going on, though the cold fowl in the window, and the cigar shop close by, scarcely inform us what. We pay for admission, and entering through a narrow passage, find ourselves in a large saloon, with a balcony all round. On the ground-floor of course there is dancing, and at the end is a bar where drink is being rapidly supplied. Up in the balcony are young fellows sitting with gaily-dressed women, drinking sherry-cobblers and smoking cigars. In time the room gets crowded, and the people in it grow a little the worse for drink. Though we can scarce see for the smoke, and hear on account of the roar of many tongues, it is not difficult to perceive in the hilariousness of some, in the bad temper of others, in the stupidity of most, and in the foul language of all, that the drink is producing its legitimate effect. That girl in satin and rouge in another hour we shall see lying on the stone pavement with an unmeaning grin, till she is borne by policemen on

a stretcher to the lock-up. That fine manly lad, out to see life, will sleep to-night where the mother now praying for him in her dreams little imagines. *She* would not have sunk so low, *he* never would have blasted a mother's hopes, had it not have been for the drink. Come out with me into the air. What a crowd there is round us, all looking pale and seedy in the clear light of a summer morn? What has kept them out all night? What has made them what they are but the drink? You start at that moving mass of sores and rags. I remember her fair and beautiful, richly appparelled and sumptuously fed; but the drink has been her bane, and will be, till one of these calm summer mornings she will be carried insensible to the nearest hospital, thence to be buried, unwept and unknown, in a pauper's grave. Away from this moral dung-hill. In a few hours the police will have retired, the debauchees will have gone home to bed, the oyster houses and gin palaces will be deserted, the place will have a serious and quiet business air, and bishops will ride past it in their cushioned carriages to make speeches at meetings for the promotion of the Gospel in foreign parts. As we go up Regent-street we see the lamps

being extinguished, and the milk carts going round, and the red newspaper expresses tearing along to catch the early train, and the green hills of Hampstead looking lovelier than ever. In the sober light of day our night in the Haymarket will seem unreal, and when we shall tell our experiences, we shall be told possibly that our picture is overdrawn.

THE CANTERBURY HALL.

“GIVE me the songs of the people, and you may make its laws,” said old Fletcher, of Saltoun, with a knowledge of human nature which statesmen do not frequently possess. Necessity is a stern taskmaster, and the workman in the factory, and the clerk in the counting-house, and the shopman behind the counter, are generally compelled to stick pretty close to work, and to the eye of the observer present very much the same appearance. They come at certain hours, they go at certain hours, and perform their daily toil with a certain amount of effectiveness and skill. Very little credit is due to them for this—their livelihood depends upon their being diligent and active—and hence I know little of the individual by merely witnessing him toiling for his daily bread. I must follow him home ; I must be with him in his hours of relaxation ; I must listen to the songs he sings and the jokes he attempts ; I must see what is his idea of

pleasure, and thus only can I get at the man as he is. Even his church or chapel goings I cannot take as indications of his real nature. He may go because his parents go, because his master goes, because his friends go, because he has been trained to go, because society expects him to go,—for a hundred reasons all equally vain in the eyes of Him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, but no man is a hypocrite where his pleasures are concerned. I can gather more about him from the way in which he spends his leisure hours than I can from his active employments of the day. They are poor miserable philosophers indeed, and guilty of an enormous blunder, who, in their investigation into the moral and social condition of the people, refuse to notice the amusements of the people in their hours of gaiety and ease. I make, then, no apology for introducing you to Canterbury Hall.

The Upper Marsh, Westminster-road, is what is called a low neighbourhood. It is not far from Astley's Theatre. Right through it runs the South Western Railway, and everywhere about it are planted pawnbrokers' shops, with an indescribable amount of dirty second-hand

clothes, and monster gin-palaces, with unlimited plate-glass and gas. Go along there what hour of the day you will, these gin-palaces are full of ragged children, hideous old women, and drunken men. "The bane and the antidote," you may say, "are thus side by side." True, but you forget that youth in its search for pleasure is blind, and sees not the warning till it is too late; and of the hundreds rushing on to the Canterbury Hall for a quiet glass, none think they will fall so low as the victims of intemperance reeling, cursing, fighting, blaspheming, in their path. But let us pass on. A well-lighted entrance attached to a public-house indicates that we have reached our destination. We proceed up a few stairs, along a passage lined with handsome engravings, to a bar, where we pay sixpence if we take a seat in the body of the hall, and nine-pence if we do the nobby and ascend into the balcony. We make our way leisurely along the floor of the building, which is really a very handsome hall, well lighted, and capable of holding fifteen hundred persons; the balcony extends round the room in the form of a horse shoe. At the opposite end to which we enter is the platform, on which is placed a grand piano

and a harmonium, on which the performers play in the intervals when the professional singers have left the stage. The chairman sits just beneath them. It is dull work to him ; but there he must sit every night smoking cigars and drinking, from seven till twelve o'clock. I fancy I detect a little touch of rouge just on the top of his cheek ; he may well need it, for even on a fine summer night like this the room is crowded, and almost every gentleman present has a pipe or a cigar in his mouth. Let us look round us ; evidently the majority present are respectable mechanics, or small tradesmen with their wives and daughters and sweethearts there. Now and then you see a midshipman, or a few fast clerks and warehousemen, who confidentially inform each other that there is " no end of talent here," and that Miss —— " is a doosed fine gal ;" and here, as elsewhere, we see a few of the class of unfortunates, whose staring eyes would fain extort an admiration which their persons do not justify. Every one is smoking, and every one has a glass before him ; but the class that come here are economical, and chiefly confine themselves to pipes and porter. The presence of the ladies has also a beneficial effect ; I see no in-

dication of intoxication, and certainly none of the songs are obscene. I may question the worth of such stanzas as the following, sung by Mr. R. Grover, Miss Pearce, and the whole of the company :—

ALFRED.

We 'll drink to the beauty that 's beaming around,
Where Nature's own flowers are blooming;
Where none but the voices of happiness sound,
And our pathway the love-light illumines.
We 'll drink, too, to the rosy god,
The god of love and beauty,
For all who are his vot'ries
Must tender him their duty.
We 'll drink while there 's love in the cup which we quaff,
Since 't is love o'er the world reigns supreme.

CHORUS.

We 'll drink to friendship firm and true,
While love the cup shall crown.

VIOLETTA.

Come, bask in the pleasure that falls to our share,
For Time on the wing's ever flying,
And flowers of love are exotics so rare,
Their odour's scarce shed ere 't is flown.
Be gay, for youth must soon depart,
And even love will vanish,
The brightest scenes, alas! will fade,
And sweetest pleasures pall.
Be gay, then, while youth still untrammell'd by care
Shall invite us to joy and to love.

CHORUS.

Ah ! let us join in the toast,
In the song and the revelling,
Passing the night in mirthful pleasure,
While love shall teach us how to treasure
This paradise on earth.

I may think I have heard sublimer compositions than the following, sung by Mrs. Caulfield with great applause :—

Fare you well, my own Mary Anne,
Fare you well for a while :
For the ship it is ready, and the wind it is fair,
And I am bound for the sea, Mary Anne.
Fare you well, &c.

Do n't you see that turtle dove,
A sitting on yonder pile,
Lamenting the loss of its own true love ?—
And so am I for mine, Mary Anne.
Fare you well, &c.

A lobster in a lobster-pot,
A blue-fish wriggling on a hook,
May suffer some, but, oh ! no not
What I do feel for my Mary Anne.
Fare you well, &c.

The pride of all the produce rare,
That in our kitchen-garden grow'd,
Was pumpkins, but none could compare
In angel-form to my Mary Anne.
Fare you well, &c.

or of the following, sung by Mrs. Caulfield, with still greater applause:—

Down in Skytown lived a maid,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 Churning butter was her trade,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 She loved a feller whose name was Will,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 His dad he used to own the mill,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?

CHORUS.

Kemo, kimo, where ? oh there ! my high, my low,
 Then in came Sally singing,
 Sometimes, Medley winkum lingtum nip cat.
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?

She wanted Will for worse or better,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 She 'd have married, but dad would n't let her.
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 And so she went and got a knife,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 She broke her heart and lost her life,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 Kemo, kimo, &c.

Then Josh he felt his dander risin',
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 So he went and swallow'd pisin,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 The village folks laugh'd in their sleeve,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 For Jordan 's a hard road to travel, I believe,
 Sing song Polly won't you try me, oh ?
 Kemo, kimo, &c.

But, compared with many of the places frequented by both sexes, Canterbury Hall is a respectable place. I may think that more rational amusement might be found than by sitting smoking and drinking in a large room on a hot summer's night. I may have my doubts whether all go home sober—the presence of a policeman in the room indicated that at times there was need for his services—but I believe the association of song and drinking and amusements pernicious in the extreme; and, knowing that man needs relaxation—that he must have his hour of amusement as well as of work—I cannot too earnestly press upon the advocates of Temperance reform the desirableness of their out-bidding the public-house in the attempts to cater for the entertainment of the people.

RATCLIFFE-HIGHWAY.

LONDON is several cities rolled into one. If we walk along Regent-street, it is a city of gorgeous shops—if you turn into the West, of parks and palaces—if you traverse St. Giles, of gin and dirt,—again, in Belgravia it is rich and grand—in Pimlico it is poor and pretentious—in Russell-square it is well to do—in Islington it is plain and pious ; and, strange as it may seem, the people are equally localised in their ideas. Jobson, the Stock-broker, lives at Clapham, and for years he has never set foot in any other streets than those leading from the Stock Exchange to that select and favoured spot. The law clerks, who live in Pimlico, seldom stray further than John-street, Bedford-row. The city gents from Islington and Holloway generally cluster round the Bank or the Post-office, and for years go in the morning and return at night by one unvaried route. The races are equally distinct. The swells in the Park, the millers in

Mark-lane, the graziers in the new cattle-market, the Jews in Houndsditch or Holywell-street, the prim pale lads in the city, the sailors in Deptford and Wapping, the German sugar-bakers in Whitechapel, really form distinct communities, and are as worth studying as any race of

“Red Indians dwelling beyond the sunset,
And the baths of all the Western stars.”

I should not like a son of mine to be born and bred in Ratcliffe-highway. That there would be a charming independence in his character, a spurning of that dreary conventionalism which makes cowards of us all, and under the deadly weight of which the heart of this great old England seems becoming daily more sick and sad, a cosmopolitanism rich and racy in the extreme—all this I admit I should have every reason to expect, but, at the same time, I believe the disadvantages would preponderate vastly. How is this? you ask. Does not Ratcliffe-highway form part of our highly-favoured land? I grant it does. I confess that there the Queen's writ is a power, that it boasts the protection of the police, that it pays rates and taxes, that it has

its churches and chapels, that it is not cut off from the rest of the empire, that it is traversed by railways, by cabs and busses, and by postmen. Nevertheless, Ratcliffe-highway is not a favourite spot of mine. I saw lately a letter from an Englishman in the *Times*, complaining of the magistrates of Hamburg, because when he was coming from church with some ladies, he strayed into a street where his sense of decorum was very properly shocked. I know the street as I do every street in Hamburg, and I know this, that it ill becomes Englishmen to write of the immorality of Hamburg, or any other continental town. Let him walk down Ratcliffe-highway or any other spot where vice loses all its charms by appearing in all its grossness. I fear that it is not true generally to the eyes of the class she leads astray that

“Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen,”

but I think it is true, or at any rate it contains a portion of truth, so far as regards Ratcliffe-highway, a stroll in which place is sure to shock more senses than one. In beastliness I think it surpasses Cologne with its

seven and thirty stenchcs, or even Bristol or a Welsh town.

Ratcliffe-highway lies contiguous to the commerce and the port of London. The men and boys engaged in navigating merchant vessels belonging to ports of the British Empire were in 1851, 240,298; and of this multitude a large portion at some time or other resides in Ratcliffe-highway. In 1856, 826 vessels, with a tonnage of 498,594 tons, entered the port of London. Jack, when he's ashore, resides here, and Jack ashore is the weakest and simplest of men. As an illustration of the way in which Jack is done—whether in any provincial port or London, for crimps are the same all the world over, let me refer to a case heard at the Tynemouth Police Court towards the end of last year. A man named Glover, the landlord of a low public-house in Clive-street, a crimp and sailors' lodging-house keeper, was summoned under the 235th and 236th clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, charged with having taken into his possession the moneys and effects of James Hall, a seaman, and with having refused to return and pay the same back to Hall when requested to do so. It appears, after being engaged in the

Black Sea in the transport service during the late war, Hall, who had to receive £30 15s., took up his quarters at Glover's, and made him his "purser." Glover charged him 14s. a-week for his lodgings, the same as the Sailors' Home, but at the end of 16 days he told him that his money was all gone, and bought the plaintiff's neckerchief of him for 1s., which he also spent in drink. The sailor, finding himself destitute, had applied to the authorities, who summoned Glover. Glover, in his defence, stated that Hall had spent his money in drink and treating, keeping a couple of bagpipers to play to him all the time he was on the spree. Glover produced the following extraordinary account against Hall:—"Dec. 9th.—20 pints of rum, £2 6s. 6d.; 20 quarts of beer, and 15 ounces of tobacco, 15s. 10th.—8 glasses of rum, and 2s. 6d. borrowed money, 4s. 6d. 11th.—Borrowed money, 2s. 6d.; 5 pints of rum, 5 gills of rum, and 15 quarts of ale, £1 12s. 6d.; 6 ounces of tobacco, 2 glasses of gin, and 2 gills of brandy, 6s. 6d. 12th.—Cash, 2s., 15 pints of rum, and 28 gills of rum, £3; 4 quarts, half a gallon, and 22 gills of beer, £1 3s. 9d.; 15 glasses of rum and 11 glasses of beer, 9s. 3d.; pint of brandy and 16 glasses of

gin, 8s. ; 36 ounces of tobacco and $3\frac{1}{2}$ glasses of gin, 12s. $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ 13th.—18 pints of rum, 15 gills of rum, and 26 quarts of beer, £3 4s. ; 26 bottles of lemonade, and 28 gills of beer, £1 ; 14 ounces of tobacco, 6 glasses of gin, 6s. $2d.$; 12 glasses of gingerade, and cash 5s., 8s. ; 1 week's board, 14s. Paid for clothes, £1 2s. $6d.$; 2 pints of rum, 10 gills of rum, and 4 glasses of beer, 16s. ; 24 glasses of spirits, 9 quarts of beer, and 7 ounces of tobacco, 14s. $7d.$ 15th.—16 half glasses of spirits, 10 glasses and 2 gills of rum, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of tobacco, and beer, 2s. $10d.$; fortnight's board, £1 8s. ; cash, £2 18s. ; spirits, tobacco, and rum, 4s. $1\frac{1}{2}d.$; cash, 5s. 17th.—Cash, 7s. ; 20 glasses of spirits, and 8 quarts of ale, 9s. $4d.$ 18th.—Ale, spirits, and tobacco, 16s. $4d.$ 19th.—35 glasses of spirits, and 20 glasses of ale, and 2 glasses of brandy, £1 4s. $10d.$ 20th.—Ale, tobacco, and cash, 7s. 24th, 25th, and 26th.—Ale and spirits, 7s. $11d.$, and other items, making up the amount in hand. The defendant had refused to deliver up Hall's clothes on the plea that the man was in his debt. Now in Ratcliffe-highway such men as Glover abound. It is unnecessary then to describe the character of the tradesmen in Ratcliffe-highway, or the charac-

ter of their wares. At one shop there are the enormous boots, which only navvies and sailors have strength to wear ; at another there are oil-skin caps, and coats and trousers, or rough woollen shirts, piled up in gigantic masses. One shop rejoices in compasses and charts, and another in the huge silver watches which Jack invariably affects. The descendants of Abraham swarm here. They sell little fish fried in oil ; they deal in second-hand clothes ; they keep lodging-houses ; I believe they stick at nothing to turn a penny, and do n't break their hearts if the penny turns out a dishonest one. Everything has a nautical adaptation. The songs sung are nautical. The last time I was there an old woman was singing to a crowd of the "Saucy Sailor Boy" who, coming disguised in poverty to his lady love, is by her ignominiously rejected, to whom rejecting he tells of his real riches, and by whom the rejection is eagerly recalled, but in vain, for the Saucy Sailor Boy declares :—

“ Do you think I am foolish, love ?

Do you think I am mad,

For to wed a poor country girl,

When there 's fortune to be had ?

“So I’ll cross the briny ocean,
Where the meadows are so green,
And since you have refused my offer, love,
Some other girl shall wear the ring.”

Up and down Ratcliffe-highway do the sailors of every country under heaven stroll—Greeks and Scythians, bond and free. Uncle Tom’s numerous progeny are there—Lascars, Chinese, bold Britons, swarthy Italians, sharp Yankees, fair-haired Saxons, and adventurous Danes—men who worship a hundred gods, and men who worship none. They have ploughed the stormy main, they have known the perils of a treacherous sea and of a lee shore—but there are worse perils, and those perils await them in Ratcliffe-highway. It is night, and the glare of gas gives the street a cheerful appearance. We pass the Sailor’s Home, a noble institution which deserves our cordial support and praise, and find at almost every step pitfalls for poor Jack. Every few yards we come to a beer-shop or a public-house, the doors of which stand temptingly open, and from the upper room of which may be heard the sound of the mirth-inspiring violin, and the tramp of toes neither “light nor fantastic.” There were public-houses

here—I know not if the custom prevails now—to which was attached a crew of infamous women; these bring Jack into the house to treat them, but while Jack drinks gin the landlord gives them from another tap water, and then against their sober villainy poor Jack has no chance. I fear many respectable people in this neighbourhood have thus made fortunes. Jack is prone to grog and dancing, and here they meet him at every turn. Women, wild-eyed, boisterous, with cheeks red with rouge and flabby with intemperance, decked out with dresses and ribbons of the gayest hue, are met with by hundreds—all alike equally coarse, and insolent, and unlovely in manners and appearance, but all equally resolved on victimising poor Jack. They dance with him in the beer-shop—they drink with him in the bar—they walk with him in the streets—they go with him to such places as Wilton's Music Hall, where each Jack Tar may be seen sitting with his pipe and his pot, witnessing dramatic performances not very artistic, but really, on the score of morality, not so objectionable as what I have seen applauded by an Adelphi audience, or patronised by the upper classes at her Majesty's Theatre. And thus the even-

ing passes away; the publicans grow rich, the keepers of infamous houses fatten on their dishonest gains—obese Jews and Jewesses become more so. The grog gets into Jack's head—the unruly tongue of woman is loosened—there are quarrels, and blows, and blood drawn, and heads broken, and cries of police, and victims in abundance for the station-house, or the hospital, or the union-house, or the lunatic asylum, save when some forlorn one (and not seldom either is this the case), reft of hope or maddened by drink and shame, plunges in the muddy waters of some neighbouring dock, to find the oblivion she found not in the dancing and drinking houses of Ratcliffe-highway.

JUDGE AND JURY CLUBS.

THIS is a comic age in which we live. We are overdone with funny writers. The ghastliest attempts at liveliness surround us on every side. I would not bring back the grave deportment and stately etiquette of days gone by, nor could I if I would. But are we not running to another extreme? Is there not a lack of reverence and dignity? If we train up our youth to comic Blackstones, and teach them to extract fun out of the grandest history done in modern Europe—the history of the Anglo-Saxon race—of the race that has founded civil and religious liberty, and still nurses it in the face of a frowning continent, what can we expect? Men are what we make them. “Just as the twig is bent the tree’s inclined.” A feeble and contemptible father is succeeded by a feeble and contemptible son. Have no grand creed of your own to make your daily path lustrous with the light of heaven. Crack your weak jest and pun at all

men have revered. Learn from *Punch* to titter, no matter the theme. And can you wonder that your son believes not in man's honour or woman's love—in God or the devil, but solely in the Holborn Casino and Cremorne? For instance, is not law one of the most wonderful achievements of civilisation? I do not go so far as "the judicious Hooker." I do not say with him that her seat is the throne of God, her voice the harmony of the universe, but is it not wonderful to think of the complex arrangements of which the judge seated in his robes on the bench, administering law, is the outward sign. In the first place, man must have learnt to give up a primary instinct of his nature—that of self-revenge. Then the central power in the darkest parts of the land must have become dominant. What ages must have past before law dared meddle with privilege, or before its administrators could realize the fact of the sanctity of the individual man, whether he starved in a garret or feasted in a palace. And when the judges went on circuit, with the gorgeous cavalcade of the olden time, what terror was struck into the hearts of the rustics, and how patent became to them the strength and dignity of law. Now

why burlesque this? The idea is good and true, yet the burlesque is permitted and exists, aye, even to this day.

It is years since I was at a Judge and Jury Club, but I believe their character is in no degree changed. The one I speak of met in an hotel not far from Covent-garden, and was presided over by a man famous in his day for his power of double *entendre*. About nine o'clock in the evening, if you went up stairs you would find a large room with benches capable of accommodating, I should think, a hundred, or a hundred and fifty persons. This room was generally well filled, and by their appearance the audience was one you would call respectable. The entrance fee entitled you to refreshment, and that refreshment, in the shape of intoxicating liquor, was by that time before each visitant. After waiting a few minutes, a rustle at the entrance would cause you to turn your eyes in that direction, when, heralded by a crier with a gown and a staff of office, exclaiming, "Make way for my Lord Chief Baron," that illustrious individual would be seen wending his way to his appointed seat. The man I write of was then about thirty-five, but he appeared much older,

and in his robes of office and with his judicial wig had almost a venerable appearance. Having seated himself and bowed to the bar—one of them they called the double of Brougham had been a dissenting minister (he is dead now—he died “game,” they told me)—the Lord Chief Baron called for a cigar and glass of brandy and water, and, having observed that the waiter was in the room and that he hoped gentlemen would give their orders, the proceedings of the evening commenced. A jury was selected; the prosecutor opened his case, which, to suit the depraved taste of his patrons, was invariably one of seduction or crim. con. Witnesses were examined and cross-examined, the females being men dressed up in women’s clothes, and everything was done that could be to pander to the lowest propensities of depraved humanity. I do not believe the audience could have stood this if it had not been for the drink. As it was, I believe many a youth fresh from home felt a little ashamed of himself that he should be in such company listening to such unmitigated ribaldry, but these reflections were soon drowned in the flowing bowl, and the lad, if he blushed at first, soon learned to laugh. I write of the time

when the railway mania had filled London with overpaid engineers, and attorneys, and parliamentary witnesses, only too anxious to see life, as they called it, and by whom this beastly entertainment was frequented night after night. I dare not even attempt to give a faint outline of the proceedings. After the defence came the summing up, which men about town told you was a model of wit, but in which the wit bore but a small proportion to the obscenity. The jury were complimented on their intelligent and lascivious appearance, all the filthy particulars which had been noticed were referred to Dog Latin, and poetical quotations were plentifully thrown in; and by twelve, amidst the plaudits of the audience, the affair, so far as the Judge and Jury Club was concerned, was over. Then there was supper for such as wished it, and an entertainment to follow, either in the shape of a concert or of an exhibition of *Poses Plastiques*. To these subsequent entertainments ladies were generally admitted—and perhaps the less I say about them or their proceedings the better. If I refer to them at all, it is but as an illustration of the drinking customs of society. These Judge and Jury Clubs after all are but an excuse for

drinking. They are held at public-houses—there is drinking going on all the time the trial lasts, —nor could sober men listen unless they had the drink. I believe an attempt has been made to introduce this kind of thing to the provinces, but it has not answered. In all our provincial towns there exists a public opinion which guarantees decency to a certain extent. In the metropolis this public opinion does not exist. No one knows that I frequent Judge and Jury Clubs, and I lose no social status if I do. It is too true that we are, as Tennyson says,

“ Fish that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy flies.”

But man does not naturally revel in obscenity : the modesty of nature will stick to him for years. If it were not for the drink, it is questionable whether he would ever lose it at all. But the Judge and Jury Clubs make you familiar with the manners of the stews ; and I solemnly believe that in Sodom and Gomorrah nothing more filthy could have been talked about, and that this side Pandemonium there is nothing more debasing or debased. If you wish to see your son thoroughly depraved, send him to a Judge and Jury Club. In a little while he will

come back to you with every noble principle blotted out, with a mind stored with pollution, and with a fitting phraseology, ready to run a mad career of debauchery and vice. Some fifteen years back the writer was at college, and one of his fellow-students was a fine young fellow, the heir to a decent fortune, and said to be connected with a noble family. The last time I was at the Judge and Jury he was employed as one of the mock counsel; but he became too intemperate even for that, and enlisted, and miserably died. They have tragic ends, many of these frequenters of Judge and Jury Clubs, and it is sad to think that, when the merriment is the loudest, and the drink is most stimulating, and the fellowship most jovial, there is burlesque even then.

THE CAVE OF HARMONY.

READER, do you know the Cave of Harmony? If you do not, so much the better. If you are one of its *habitués*, I fear no words of mine can make you forsake it. It is said the Cave is altered since we were there—so much the better; Thackeray, I think, had something to do with that reform—and that now nothing objectionable is sung. Still, I doubt whether drinking and harmony after twelve P.M. can do much good. You and I, it may be, are old men,

“Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,
Empty scarecrows you and I.”

We have run through youth with money in our pockets and time on our hands, and have seen all that life can offer, and know, what so many do not, that pleasure’s cup but sparkles near the brim. What we have done and been has been wine working on the fiery impulses of young blood, but now, sir, with our hair turning grey and our eyes growing dim, shall we not lift up a

warning voice, and ask youth to pause ere it take the final plunge which for years, it may be for ever, shall estrange it from innocence, and peace, and God.

It is midnight in the great city in which we write. For a while sorrow and care are veiled from the eyes of men, and to the poorest and most toilworn come pleasant dreams. The shops have long been closed, the roar of the streets has died away, the theatres have discharged their jaded crowds, and as we walk along, meeting now and then a poor drunkard reeling home—or a policeman silently patrolling the streets—or one of the unfortunates, by turns man's victim and curse—or some of the votaries of dissipation who are awake when other men are asleep—we realize all the grandeur and poetry and magnificence of London by night, and wonder not that Savage and Johnson should have found such a fascination in the scene, and that other sons of genius have read such sermons in its eloquent stones. Let us stroll towards Covent Garden—in another hour it will be ringing with the oaths and execrations of seemingly all the market gardeners in Middlesex—and enter that doorway indicated by the glare of gas; come with me

down these stairs, and into that room, the door of which the waiter holds obligingly open. Let us stand here while we recover from the effect of the fumes of grog and the smoke of tobacco. You find yourself in a room holding perhaps a couple of hundred gentlemen (no ladies are present, and if you sit here an hour you will be thankful they are not) ; but look around, this is a respectable place, this Cave of Harmony, there are no poor people here. We have heavy swells, moustached, and with white kids—officers in the army—scions of noble houses—country gentlemen, and merchants, and lawyers in town on business—literary men, medical students, and old fogies, with every moral sensibility dead, who have sat here for years listening to the same songs and the same outpourings of obscenity ; they could tell you something, these old fogies—what changes they have seen, as one generation after another of students and rakes and men about town have thought it fast to sup every night within these walls ; of course the majority in the room are clerks, and commercial gents, and fellows in Government situations, learning here the extravagance which in time will compel them to commit frauds and for-

gery, and eventually perhaps land them in a felon's jail. For the Cave of Harmony is not a cheap place to sup at. The chop and baked potatoes are excellent but dear, and four or five shillings is a sum soon spent if you do as every one here does,—take your pint of stout, and three or four glasses of grog ; and the chances are you will meet a friend, who will persuade you to make a night of it and stroll West with him, where you will see Vice flaunting more finely and with greater bravery than in any other capital in Europe. But let us drop these considerations. We are at one end of a long room, at the other is a raised platform, on which is a piano, and in front of which some half-dozen gentlemen are seated—these are the performers. Their faces you know well enough, for they are in much repute for dinners at the London Tavern or the Freemasons, and the last time I dined with the Indigent Blind—with a High Church dignitary in the chair—we had the whole half-dozen to assist ; they are good singers, I willingly confess, and sing many of them touching songs of youth, and hope, and true love, and home—but they don't sing the better for singing during the small hours and in a drinking saloon. That

little Hebrew, who has been at it, he tells me, for upwards of forty years, is not an improvisatore like Theodore Hook, but he does it well enough for an audience good-natured and a little the worse for drink. The imitations of a barnyard, with its cows, and geese, and turkeys, and other live stock, by that poor, seedy, needy, smiling German, are amusing to hear them once, but every one here has heard them over and over again. What they need is something richer, and more spicy, as they term it. You see they are getting tired of sentimental songs, and war songs, and madrigals, and glees. They do n't want to hear—

“ I know a maiden fair to see,”

or,

“ Down in a flowery vale,
All on a summer morning,”

or,

“ In going to my lonely bed
As one that would have slept.”

They are careless when Podder sings “ Kathleen Mavourneen,” and are indifferent to the manner in which Brown renders

“ Beautiful Venice, city of song.”

All these goes of grog have not been in vain. The coarser appetites of their nature are aroused

—the place seems a Babel. A favourite's name is sounded—it is repeated with every variety of emphasis in every corner of the room; the tables are struck with drunken fists till the tumult becomes a perfect storm; the master of the place raps the table with an auctioneer's hammer—“Silence, gentlemen, if you please, Mr. —— will sing a comic song;” and immediately a man in a beggar's costume, and with the face of an idiot, jumps upon the stage. His appearance is a signal for a whirlwind of applause. He sings, with accompanying action, some dozen verses of doggerel, remarkable for obscenity and imbecility. You look around, but not a blush do you see in that crowded room; not one single head is held down in shame; not one high-spirited gentleman rushes indignantly from the place. On the contrary, the singer is greeted with the most lavish expression of applause, continued so loudly and so long that again the proprietor has to announce, “Mr. —— will sing another comic song.” But this time the comic singer does not dress for his part, and you see a young, good-looking, well-dressed, gentlemanly fellow voluntarily degrading himself for the pleasure of men more degraded still. You tell me the comic

singer is a happy fellow, that he gets six guineas a-week, that he lives in a nice little cottage in the Hampstead-road. I know better than you; the man I write of, after having been the attraction of the Cave of Harmony for years, after having been feasted by the nobility and gentry, after having led a career of pleasure on the most extravagant scale, will go down yet young as a beggar to one of our sea-port towns, and, after craving in vain a refuge from the winter's cold and a crust of bread, will die in the workhouse, and be buried in a pauper's grave. How many of the gay young fellows now around us will have a similar termination to their career! I never can pass the Cave of Harmony without thinking of the comic singer as last I saw him—in the very flush of health and life, stimulated by wine and applause, little dreaming of the workhouse in which he was so soon to beg for room to die.

DISCUSSION CLUBS.

It is the condition of a public-house that it must do a good business some way or other. Mr. Hinton, who has just got his license for Highbury Barn, says the dining apartment fell off and he was obliged to institute Soirées Dan-santes. Sometimes the publican gets a female dressed up in a Bloomer costume; sometimes he has for his barman a giant, or a dwarf, or an Albino, or a Kaffir chief—actually as an attraction to decent people to go and drink their pot of beer. I find the following advertisement in the *Morning Advertiser*:—

“The Sheep-eater of Hindostan.—To be seen, the Sheep-eater of Hindostan, representing an exhibition which took place on the 3rd of March, 1796, before Colonel Patrick Douglas and other officers of a battalion of Native Infantry, and a great concourse of the inhabitants of the military station of Futtehghur. It is engraved from a sketch, taken on the spot by a native artist, and

under the inspection of Major-General Hardwicke, F. R. S. The Sheep-eater was a native of India, about thirty years of age, five feet nine inches high, slender, well formed, and rather muscular. He was attended by a very old man, whom he called his father or preceptor, termed by the natives Gooroo or Priest, who stated he had formerly followed the same practice. He was above the ordinary stature of the natives of India, and wore his hair, which was of great length, coiled into the form of a turban; and his beard was twisted like a rope, and nearly reached his feet, being five feet eight inches in length. The exhibitor began his operation by raising the sheep from the ground with his teeth. He then threw the animal on its back, and, with his teeth and hands only, separated the limbs, and stript the flesh from the bones. After mixing dust with the meat, by rubbing it on the ground, in that dirty state he swallowed what he tore off. The last part of the operation was chewing the leaves of a plant, the local name of which is Madaar (*asclepias gigantea*), and the milky juice, which is of a very corrosive nature, he swallowed. Having made a collection of money, and the assemblage of people

being much increased, he offered to eat a second sheep, and actually commenced the operation as before. It may be proper to observe, that the sheep in most parts of India are as small as the Welsh sheep of Great Britain. No. 1, represents lifting the sheep from the ground with his teeth only. 2. Having thrown the sheep on its back, he extends the limbs, preparatory to No. 3. 3. Ripping the animal open from the flank to the breast. 4. Having removed the intestines, &c., he buries his head in the body, to drink the blood collected. 5. Exhibiting his face, after this sanguinary draught. 6. Having devoured every portion of flesh from the bones, he chews the plant Madaar. 7. After changing his waist-cloth, he returns with his Gooroo, or preceptor, and offers to eat the second sheep, for the satisfaction of the increased number of spectators."

I do not give the name of the spirited proprietor, but in his advertisement he declares he intends exhibiting it *over the bar for a short time gratuitously*. This is rich; it is like the doctor's advice gratis.

Now in the same manner the publicans provide a weekly discussion meeting for that part of the public that loves to hear itself speak. There

is one at the Belvidere, Pentonville; another at the Horns, Kennington. Fleet-street is much favoured. There are the Temple Forum, the Cogers' Hall, and another large room in Shoe-lane. These are gratuitous, like the picture in the above advertisement—that is, you are expected to sit and drink all night. The most celebrated one is that which meets not far from the Temple, presided over by the editor of a Sunday paper, and assisted by several reporters connected with the daily journals. One of them not long since contested an Irish borough on Protestant principles, but unfortunately, instead of being returned, found himself in gaol for election expenses. Besides these, there are many third and fourth-rate literary men—a class, I fear, (I speak of the minors,) the most braggart, lying, and needy under heaven—men who are going to do wonders, but who never 'do—whose success, if such a term may be applied to their career, arises simply from their power of brag, and from the possession of an enviable amount of self-esteem. Then there are briefless barristers, but too happy to have an opportunity of airing their dictionaries, and tradesmen, and clerks, all fancying that there is no need why they should hide

their talents under a napkin. Still these places do not flourish, and there are more bad speeches made than good ones. You are cooped up in an inconvenient apartment, suffocated by tobacco-smoke, and very unpleasantly affected by the beer and gin-and-water which every one feels bound to consume. The waiter is in the room, and you are expected to give your orders. The speaking is a secondary consideration. The first thing you are required to do is to drink. I have now in my mind's eye a young fellow who was a great man at one of these places. He was a clerk with limited means, but he came to these places night after night, and drank and spent his money freely. It is the old tale over again. He was entrusted with his employer's cash. He applied some of it to liquidate his expenses. He was unable to replace it. Discovery was made at last ; he is now in Newgate, and his wife—for he was just married—is breaking her young heart with shame and want. The curse of these public-houses is that they lead men into expense and reduce them into poverty, if they do not almost necessitate crime. A discussion is all very well, and the habit of being able to get up and say a few words when occasion requires pertinent and

apropos is invaluable, but to acquire that habit it is scarcely worth while to sit all night toping, while Smithers is playing old gooseberry with his H's or O'Flaherty raving of the wrongs of the Green Isle. The questions discussed are generally such as are peculiar to the time. Was Lord Cardigan a hero? Does Sir Benjamin Hall deserve well of the public for his conduct with reference to Sunday bands? Does the Palmerston cabinet deserve the support of the country? Would Lord John Russell's scheme of national education, if carried out, be a public benefit? Let men talk on these subjects if they will, and as long as they will, but I think they will think more clearly, and talk better, and come sooner to a rational decision, if they do not drink. I am sure I have seen the audience and the orators more inflamed by beer than by eloquence, and when turned out into the street after a long sitting, many, I imagine, have seen a couple of moons and double the usual allowance of lamps and police. The worst of it is, that after the discussion is over, there will be always a few stop to have a bit of supper and another glass. I remember, just as the war broke out, I was at one of the places to which I have already

referred, the subject was the propriety of erecting on the ruins of Turkey a united Greece. The Philhellenists came down in great force, and young Greeks, Sophocles and Ionides, and many more screaming at the top of their voices, were there as well. What with the excitement of the subject and what with the excitement of the drink, the whole affair settled into a regular orgie, and the tumult of that night still rings wildly in my ear. Dumbiedikes would have stared at the gift of tongues exhibited on that occasion.

If you admire pot-house oratory, then attend one of these places. The chair is generally taken about nine, and the proceedings close at twelve. A gentleman already agreed on commences the discussion, then the debate is left to drag its slow length along, sometimes giving rise to animated discussions, and at other times being a terrible failure. What is considered the treat of the evening is generally something of this sort—An indifferent speaker, perhaps a stranger, gets up and makes a short speech, which brings up one of the old seasoned debaters, great in his own eyes and in those of almost every one present. I assure you he is down upon

the modest debutant in fine style, making mince-meat of his facts, and ridiculing his logic. The easier his work is, the more does he labour at it. The audience frantically applaud, and the orator as he sits down evidently thinks Brougham could not have slashed an opponent in better style. The gravity of these speakers is really amusing. Did they speak the language of millions—did principles of eternal import dwell upon their tongue—did nations breathlessly wait for their decisions—did they shake the arsenal and fulmine over Greece—they could not set about their work in a more determined manner. And Jones, from his tremendous castigation of Palmerston, or fierce diatribe against Lord John, will sneak off quietly to his back garret in Pentonville, just as we can imagine Diocletian abandoning an empire to plant cabbages at Salone. It is clear some of the speakers are naturally good orators; but the regular staggers have a seedy appearance, and that peculiar redness of the nose or soddenness of the skin which indicates the drinker; and if you go much, you will find a paper with five-shilling subscriptions, and you will be asked to give your name, for the benefit of some prominent debater whose affairs do not

seem to have prospered, in spite of their master's matchless powers of oratory. The truth is, the money has been spent here in drink that was required elsewhere, and wife and children have starved at home while the orator was declaiming against Despotism abroad. I fear the only class benefited by these discussions are the landlords, who point to their door and whisper in your ears, Admission gratis. Yes, that is true; but the egress, ah, there's the rub! It is that for which you must pay, and pay handsomely, too, as hundreds of poor fellows have found to their cost.

THE CYDER CELLARS.

IN the days of the gay and graceless Charles, Bow-street was the Bond-street of London. In the taverns of that quarter were the true homes and haunts of the British poets. That they were much better for all their drinking and worship of the small hours, I more than doubt. Pope tried the pace, but found it killing, and had the wisdom to go and live at Twickenham and cease to play the part of a man about town. Describing Addison's life at this period, he says, "He usually studied all the morning, then met his party at Button's, and dined there, and stayed there five or six hours, and sometimes far into the night. I was of the company for about a year, but found it too much for me. *I hurt my health, and so I quitted it.*" But the wits died off, and Tom's, Will's, Button's became desolate, and in their place the Cyder Cellars grew famous.

You know Maiden-lane, where an old hair-

dresser had a son born to him, who, under the name of Turner, won his way to the first rank amongst English painters,—where Voltaire, “so witty, profligate, and thin,” lodged at the house of a French peruke-maker, and corresponded with Swift, and Pope, and the other literary men of the times,—where Fielding laid the foundation of an eternal fame,—where Andrew Marvell refused courtly bribes, and in sublime poverty proudly picked his mutton-bone; there, some long time since, stood a mansion, the residence, in a green old age, of that Nell Gwynne of whom, with a strange perversity, the world speaks as kindly as if she were a Grace Darling, or a Florence Nightingale, or a Margaret Fuller, or an Elizabeth Fry. A portion of the old house still remains, with its ancient wainscoting. Well, on the site of this mansion was, and is, the Cyder Cellars, the oldest house of its class in London, actually referred to in a rare pamphlet now extant in the British Museum, entitled “Adventures Underground in the Year 1750.” In those days to drink deep was deemed a virtue, and the literary class, after the exhausting labours of the day, loved nothing better than to sit soaking all night in the Cyder Cel-

lars, where all restraints were thrown on one side,—where the song was sung and the wine was quaffed, and men were fools enough to think they were getting happy when they were only getting drunk. I can understand why the wits went to the Cyder Cellars then. Few of them lived in a style in which they would like to receive their friends. In a place like the Cyder Cellars they could meet after the theatres were closed, and the occupations of the day over, and sup and talk and drink with more freedom than in any private house; and no doubt many were the ingenuous youths who went to the Cyder Cellars to see the learned Mr. Bayle, or the great Grecian Porson, or the eminent tragedian Mr. Edmund Kean, and thought it a fine thing to view those distinguished men maudlin, or obscene, or blasphemous, over their cups. But the wits do not go to the Cyder Cellars now. Even the men about town do not go there much. I remember when that dismal song, “Sam Hall,” was sung—a song in which a wretch is supposed to utter all the wretchedness in his soul, all his sickness of life, all his abhorrence of mankind, as he was on his way to Tyburn drop—horrible as the song was—revolting as it was to all but

blazé men, the room was crammed to suffocation, —it was impossible often to get a seat, and you might have heard a pin drop. Where are the crowds that listened to that song? My own companion—where is he? A finer young man, with richer promise, I knew not. He had a generous disposition, a taste for study, and was blessed with the constitution of a horse; he had received a liberal education; his morals had been carefully attended to; his parents were people of large property, and this son I always deemed his mother's favourite son; and now in his very prime, when he might have been a blessing to society, when in his successful professional career his parents might have reaped a reward, when the heart of some loving, tender, trusting woman might have joyed in his love, when fair young children, calling him father, might have clustered round his knees, he is dying, I am told, before their very eyes, slowly, and with agony, from the terrible effects of drink. And does it not really seem as if there were a curse attaching to those connected with the trade? A week or two since, had you been passing down Bridges-street into the Strand late on a Saturday night, or early on a Sunday

morning, on a door step, in spite of the pouring rain, you might have seen a woman, in her rags and loneliness, trying to gather a few hours of sleep. She was too weak to pursue her unhallowed calling, and had she been so disposed on that cold, wet night, it would have been of little avail had she walked the streets. The policeman as he goes his monotonous rounds tells her to move on. She wakes up, gets upon her legs, hobbles along, and then, when he is past, again, weary and wayworn, seeks the friendly doorstep. The policeman returns ; " What, here still ?" he exclaims. Ah yes ! she has not power to move away. She is weak, ill, dying. The friendly police carry her to the neighbouring hospital. " She cannot be received here," says Routine, and she is taken to the workhouse. Again she is taken to the hospital, admitted at last—for is she not a woman, and a young one, too ?—not more than twenty-five, it appears,—and on her face, stained with intemperance and sin, there is the dread stamp of death—in this case, perhaps, a welcome messenger ; for who would live, fallen, friendless, forsaken, with a diseased body and a broken heart ? The spirit of a man can sustain his infirmity ; but a wounded spirit who

can bear? Peace be with her! in another hour or two she will have done with this wretched life of hers, and have gone where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." More than usual official cruelty is visible in this case, for all that is given her between her admission and her death is a simple cup of tea; and the coroner's verdict very properly censures the hospital authorities. Well, what connexion, you ask, is there with this girl's sad fate and the jollity of the Cyder Cellars? Only this, that her father made the Cyder Cellars so popular a place of resort. If I go there again I shall think of Louisa Regan, who began life as the daughter of a successful publican, who had been a governess in a nobleman's family, at the early age of twenty-five rescued from the streets by policemen, and dependent on charity for a bed on which to die. In the foaming cup, in the glitter of the gas, while the comic singer was most comical, or the sentimental singer most sentimental, I could not be oblivious of her fate. Is there not poison in the bowl? Is there not madness in the merriment? To the night so bright does there not come a dolorous morrow? You may sing and laugh the hours away in the

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Cyder Cellars for a while, but you must pay your reckoning, and then, I imagine, you will doubt whether the amusement was worth the price. Youth generally pays too dear for its whistle. Is it ever to be so? I fear so, so long as that whistle is bought under the deceitful influence of drink.

LEICESTER-SQUARE.

ONE of the peculiar institutions of the country is the square. Charles Knight says :—" The Piazza, Place, Platz, of Italy, France, or Germany, have little in common with it. Its elements are simple enough—an open space of a square figure, houses on each of the four sides, and an enclosed centre with turf, a few trees, and, it may be, flowers ; and there is a square." There are fashionable squares, all alive with the sound of carriage-wheels and the chaste accents of a thousand flunkeys ; there are city squares, dull, dark places, with old red-brick houses, and a stunted, smoke-dried shrub or two in the middle. Then there are respectable squares, which never were fashionable, nor ever aimed to be such ; and then there are squares which were once fashionable, but now are sadly gone out of repute. One of the chief of these is Leicester-square. Do our readers remember how Queen Caroline found time to be the mother of seven

promising children, of whom the eldest, Frederick, Prince of Wales, was a continual source of sorrow and vexation to both his parents? "He resembled," writes Horace Walpole, with his usual sneer, "the Black Prince only in dying before his father." Well, there was a house built before the Commonwealth, called Leicester-house. Hither came this young, dissipated, short-lived Prince, and fixed his court. When he passed away, and the wits wrote—

" Here lies Fred,
Who was alive,
And is dead,"

still the place had the prestige of fashion. It gradually assumed the shape of a square, and became the dwelling-place of men truly great. Sir Isaac Newton resided near the square, in a house yet standing, and known to fast men as Bertolini's, *alias* the Newton Hotel. Where now we see the Sablonière Hotel, Hogarth once dwelt, and at a later time Sir Joshua Reynolds lived on the opposite side of the square. In its neighbourhood Sir Charles Bell made his discoveries respecting the nervous system, and here the renowned John Hunter lived. In later times Wordsworth made it the scene of his Moon-

gazers ; and if he could term it " Leicester's busy square," still more is that epithet appropriate to it at the present time. It is true that the Great Globe is not a success ; that the Panopticon failed ; that the Western Literary Institution did not flourish ; that the place is not literary or scientific, nor even business-like, for by daylight the shops look seedy, and the wares exhibited are somewhat of the cheapest. But at night a change comes over the spirit of its dream. Here, from cheap lodging-houses hard by, from cold garrets or dark and dusty two-pair backs, crawl out to walk its flagstones, or taint its air with the smoke of cheap cigars, men of all nations and tongues—French, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Poles—the scoundrels and patriots of Europe. There is business here now ; the air is laden with the sickly odour of a thousand dinners. Hotels and *cafés* and *restaurants* are lit up and gay. Wine-shades attract us ; we hear the click of billiards. This house we know to be a betting house—that to be a hell. A man runs up against us. He turns round and apologises. I catch a glimpse of his face. I see at once that he is a billiard-room shark. Look at his pale face, his cold eye, his hard mouth ;

and do n't play with him, however civil. Above all, do n't imagine from his exterior that he is a gentleman. A gentleman does not wear slop-shop clothes nor mosaic gold.

You wish to sit down. Well, as it is past the midnight hour, we will go into this *Café Chansante*. At any rate the foreigners have more taste than ourselves. The pretty young girls, French or German, at the bar give the place a pleasant appearance, and the mirrors on all sides reflect the gay forms and faces here assembled. But we pass into the concert room, where some Spanish minstrels in national costumes are singing national airs. As you are not musical and cannot understand these distinguished foreigners, let us see who are here, the Swiss Kellner, with his wonted civility, having first brought us a cup of coffee and a cigar. I do n't know why it is so, but it always struck me that of all asses the English ass is the greatest. How conspicuous, for instance, are those three young fellows sitting at the small marble table in front of us. Most likely they are medical students. Of course they are drinking and smoking, and have female companions, respecting whose character there can be no doubt. How happy are they in their

conceit—in their insolent laugh at the foreigners round them—in their vulgar shouts of derisive applause. Talk to them, and you will be astonished to find how morally dead they are, how narrow is their range of thought, how obsolete are all their ideas, how suppressed are all their sympathies: not even the beer they drink can be heavier. Yet these lads are to teach the next age its medical science—and in the last-death-struggle, when we would save the life we love, with broken hearts and streaming eyes we shall appeal to them in vain. In England the general practitioner will always be under-bred so long as the night-house and the casino absorb the hours science imperiously claims. But pass on to this next table. Look at this girl all radiant with beauty and smiles—beautiful even in spite of her long-lost virtue and life of sin. For,

“ You may break, you may ruin, the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

The man seated by her side is in love with her. It may be for her love he has given up mother, sister, betrothed, home, his fair name, his prospects in life, his hopes of heaven; and she no more heeds his passionate vows than does the rock the murmur of the waves at its feet;

and already her wanton eye glances round the room for other victims to sacrifice to her vanity and pride. Oh, the deceit and craft and hardness of women such as she! And yet on account of such in distant village-homes there is sadness, and the mother and sister deny themselves many a luxury, and grayhaired fathers mourn over their lost and loved—their Benjamins—born and nurtured to come to such an end. Perhaps at the next table the picture is reversed; that woman is beautiful, and her face has a smile, and there is a flush upon her cheek, and the wine has driven from her heart for a while bitter memories; but she is not happy, though loud be her laugh; and if she dared to sit and think of the hour when she fell, and of the mire and dirt along which she has crawled, of what she is now in her rustling silks, and what she was in her peasant dress then—eyes full of grief, and dim with tears, would look into her own; and out of that gilded room, and away from all the song and laughter and wine, would she not rush home to die? Yet if she now sells herself to pay to-morrow's baker's bill, is she to be trod on by the high-born beauty that goes up to God's altar with one for whom she has no love, for an estab-

lishment that will make her bridesmaids yellow with well-bred jealousy? But we are all gay here. Is not the room light and cheerful? Is not the whole aspect all mirth-inspiring? Does not dull care flee the flowing bowl? Jolly fellows are sitting and telling each other tales which you would be sorry your sister should hear, and which no mother would believe would be ever heard by son of hers without a manly protest. Women are laughing and drinking as if theirs were not lives of shame. Sated men about town languidly smoke, and the eye of the gloomy refugee sparkles, and his heart beats quicker, as he hears the song of his father-land. The hours hasten on—the company depart—the wanton beauty, flushed with conquest, rides off in the Hansom, or it may be in her private brougham, to her luxurious rooms; while her sister, shivering in the cold night, begs us for two-pence with which to purchase a bed of straw. Poor forlorn one! in another year thou wilt lie down in another bed, only to wake up when the last trump shall sound!

DR. JOHNSON'S TAVERN.

LEIGH HUNT, Barry Cornwall, and the *Times* are all eloquent in the praise of alcohol. It lifts us above this dull earth, it fires our genius, it gives to us the large utterances of the gods. Barry Cornwall tells us—

“Bad are the times
And bad the rhymes
That scorn old wine.”

Leigh Hunt translates “Bacchus in Tuscany,” and sanctions such lines as the following—

“I would sooner take to poison
Than a single cup set eyes on
Of that bitter and guilty stuff ye
Talk of by the name of coffee ;”

and the *Times* everywhere inculcates the idea that, without wine, poetry and eloquence and wit were dumb and dead. Was Sidney Smith witty, was Shelley a poet, or was he who in old times drew away the Hebrew multitude from the crowded streets of Jerusalem out into the desert,

whose food was locusts and wild honey, whose raiment was a leathern girdle—was he not eloquent, as he warned the terror-stricken mob that hung upon his lips of the wrath to come? The truth is, men have often reserved the outpourings of their mind for the social glass, and have fallen into the natural mistake of believing that it was the glass, and not the opportunity and the action of mind upon mind, that elicited a certain amount of joyous fun. I must quote an anecdote from Sir Walter Scott's *Life* to illustrate my meaning. He tells us one of his school-fellows was always at the top of the class. Young Scott found that when asked a question the lad alluded to was in the habit of fumbling one peculiar button. Scott cut off that button. The next time the poor fellow was asked a question, as usual he put his hand to fumble the friendly button—alas! it was gone, and with it his power, and he speedily lost his place. The writers I have quoted, to be consistent, should argue it was the button that made that lad sharp and clever.

But if you still doubt, let us test the thing practically. In Bolt-court, Fleet-street, there is a tavern bearing the honoured name of Dr.

Johnson. Dr. Johnson lived in this court, and hence, I suppose, the sign ; but the Doctor was a total abstainer. He found he could not be a moderate drinker, so he verily gave up the drink altogether. He told that precious ass, Boswell, to drink water, because if he did that he would be sure not to get drunk, whereas if he drank wine he was not so sure ; and Boswell, to whom the idea seems never to have occurred, prints the remark as an astonishing instance of his hero's sagacity. But I pass on to modern times. In this Dr. Johnson Tavern is situated "The City Concert Room." I suppose the City does not care much about concerts, as I have generally found it very thinly attended. It is a handsome room, and perhaps there are about fifty or sixty gentlemen, chiefly young ones, present. You do not see swells here as at Evans's. They are all very plain-looking people, from the neighbouring shops, or from the warehouses in Cheapside. Just by me are three pale heavy-looking young men, whose intellects seem to me dead, except so far as a low cunning indicates a sharpness where money is concerned. One of them is stupidly beery. Their great object is to get him to drink more, notwithstanding his repeated assurances,

uttered, however, in a very husky tone, that he must go back to "Islington" to-night. A lady at one end of the room, with a very handsome blue satin dress and a very powerful voice, is screaming out something about "Lovely Spring," but this little party is evidently indifferent to the charms of the song. Just beyond me is a gent with a short pipe and a very stiff collar. I watch him for an hour, and whether he is enjoying himself intensely, or whether he is enduring an indescribable amount of inward agony, I cannot tell. A little further off is another gent with a very red scarf, equally stoical in appearance. Behind me are two verdant youths, of limited means I imagine; but they have the pleasure of speaking to the comic singer, and take tickets for that interesting gentleman's benefit. But the comic singer comes forward, and sings with appropriate action of the doings of a little insect very partial to comfortable quarters. That song I have known fifteen years. I have heard Sharp sing it, Ross sing it, Cowell sing it. Night after night in some drinking room in some part of London or other is a beery audience told—

“Creeping where no life doth be,
A rare old plant is the lively flea.”

And after a pursuit very vividly pantomimed, the little stranger is suffered to be caught, and to tell the catcher that it is his father's ghost, doomed for a season to walk the earth and nip him most infernally, and so on. Now I am sure that every one in the room has heard this dozens of times before, yet old men are laughing as if it was an absolute novelty. Talk about alcohol brightening men's intellects ! When I come to such places as this, it always seems to me to have a precisely contrary effect. Men could not sit and hear all these stale witticisms unless they drank. Sober, I am sure they could not do it, not even if they were paid for it ; and yet all seem enraptured. I remark, however, one exception. Two waiters help to a seat by my side a very dirty little man with red eyes, and generally shabby appearance. The waiters set down by him a glass of grog, offer him a cigar, and then playfully shaking their fingers at him, as if to intimate he had better be quiet, leave him to his fate. After a few minutes of deep thought, he looks to me and beckons. I

take no notice. He repeats the signal. I lean forward.

“Very o-old, sir.”

“What do you mean?” we ask.

“The comic singer very o-old, sir.”

We intimate as much.

“But get him on a fresh piece, sir, and see how he can go-o.” Here our friend began rolling one arm rapidly round the other, to give us an idea of the comic singer’s powers.

“Pity he don’t give something new,” repeats our friend. Another assenting nod on our part and the conversation ceases. But we suppose it is with comic singers as with others. “A man who has settled his opinions does not love to have the tranquillity of his convictions disturbed,” wrote Dr. Johnson, and a comic singer does not like to have the bother of learning fresh songs. But the comic singer was applauded and encored, and then he treated us to a monologue, in which he describes how he, the drunken husband, stays out all night, and makes it up with his “old ooman” when he gets home; and in the course of his remarks of course he declares teetotalism is humbug, that there was truth in wine, but he’d be blessed if there was any in water;

that the man who would drink the latter would be a muddy cistern—forgetting all the while the *tu quoque* the water-drinkers would very fairly urge, on the authority even of Mr. Henry Drummond; and then I came away, thinking that if drinking made men witty and light-hearted, I had been very unfortunate on the night of my visit. Once upon a time, as the writer was in the Cave of Harmony, the polite manager asked him his opinion of a new comic singer. Having given it, the red-faced little man turned to us with a sigh, and said, “Ah, sir, you have no idea what a dearth there is of comic talent now-a-days.” And truly he was right. There is little fun and comedy and wit anywhere. I know not where they are; I know where they are not. You will not find them in the taverns where men sit all the evening listening to music for which they do not care, and drinking all the while.

THE SPORTING PUBLIC-HOUSE

WAS instituted for the combined purpose of encouraging drinking, and what its admirers term the noble art of self-defence. There was a time when boxing was in fashion; when but few of our noblemen and gentlemen did not take lessons in the pugilistic art. "I can assert, without fear of contradiction," writes Pierce Egan, "that I furnished the present Duke of Buccleuch with a pair of boxing-gloves and all the volumes of 'Boxiana' during his studies at Eton College." Prince George of Cambridge learnt the rudiments of the art from young Richmond; the late Duke of Portland was a pupil of that Jackson whose name is familiar to all readers of Byron. At the first public dinner of the Pugilistic Society, held at the Thatched House Tavern, 1814, a baronet, Sir Henry Smith, was in the chair; and it is a fact, when the war with France was terminated, and the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia,

accompanied by Blucher and Platoff, visited this country, that not anything they had witnessed appeared to interest them more than the sparring matches between Jackson, Tom Crib, Belcher, Old Dutch Sam, at a *déjeuner* given by Lord Lowther at his mansion. Indeed, so delighted were those great masters of the art of war with the combats between those first-rate boxers, that Messrs. Blucher and Platoff had a second exhibition by their own express desire at the Earl of Elgin's house. Actually even in the House of Commons Mr. Wyndham favoured the House with a description, warm and glowing, of a recent contest between Richmond and Maddox, of which he had been a spectator; and it is not long since Mr. Gully, a prizefighter, represented Pontefract. The late George IV., when Prince of Wales, was also a spectator at the fight upon a stage on Brighton Downs between Tom Tyne, a distinguished boxer, with a publican of milling notoriety. The latter was killed by a blow on his temple, and died almost upon the instant. The royal debauchee never attended another, but his brother, the late William the Fourth, was often a spectator of the matches on Moulsey Hurst. In this respect the age has made pro-

gress. Our noblemen no longer patronize the prize-ring. Our young princes have a purer taste. Yet the institution, with all its brutality and blackguardism, still exists, and in the *Advertiser*, side by side with an article bewailing the spread of German neology in our dissenting colleges, or speaking evil of such earnest workers in the wide field of philanthropy as Maurice or Kingsley, you will read of one of the beastly prize-fights which still disgrace the land. But the *Advertiser* is the publicans' paper, and it is a fact easily understood that the prizefighter, when his day is over, generally keeps a public-house, which is generally called a sporting-house. A warm admirer of them writes, "Fun, civility, mirth, good-humour, and sporting events are the general theme of conversation to be met with over a cheerful glass at the above houses." Ben Caunt's, in St. Martin's-lane, is perhaps the principal one, but there are some five or six besides in various parts of the metropolis. Let us enter one. In spite of the assurance of civility and good humour, I do n't think you will stay long, but will feel on a small scale what Daniel must have felt in the lions' den.

We enter, we will say, Bang Up's hostelry,

about ten on a Thursday evening ; there is Bang Up at the bar, with his ton of flesh and broken nose. Many people think it worth while to go and spend one or two shillings at Bang Up's bar, merely that they may have the pleasure of seeing him, and consider him cheap at the money. I don't admire their taste. I once spent an evening with the Norfolk Giant, and I did not find him very witty or well informed. But let us walk up-stairs, having first paid sixpence to a door-keeper, by appearance a negro, for which we are to receive a certain amount of refreshment, if beer and grog come rightly under that denomination ; at length we find ourselves in a very ordinary room, with very extraordinary people in it. First there are the portraits—*imprimis* Bang Up, looking grosser and more animal than ever. Secondly, Mrs. Bang Up, the exact counterpart of her bosom's lord ; then a tribe of Bang Ups junior, of all sizes and sexes, attract our astonished eyes. Then—for the room is a complete Walhalla—we have portraits of sporting heroes innumerable, with villanous foreheads, all “vacant of our glorious gains,” heavy eyes, thick bull necks, and very short croppy hair. Here Gully van-

quishes Bob Gregson, "the Lancashire champion," one of the finest and most formidable men of the day. There Jack Randall and Ned Turner display "a fine science and capital fighting," almost unparalleled, and so on ; for the list is long, and it is one we do not care to repeat. We seat ourselves at the further end of the room, with a few gentlemen drinking gin and smoking cigars. Twenty or thirty mean-looking men are seated along the side ; they are mostly dirty, and have broken noses ; they are not very conversational, but seem chiefly to be deeply engaged in smoking. At length the waiter brings out some boxing gloves ; one man takes off his coat and waistcoat, possibly his shirt, and puts them on ; another does the same—they stand up to each other, the gents at the table encourage them, and the seedy men with broken noses look on very knowingly ; they spar for some time, till the one feels that he cannot touch the other, and throws down the gloves ; a small collection is then made for the noble art of self-defence, which, I presume, is divided amongst the performers ; other actors come upon the stage, and the friendly contests are maintained till Bang Up closes his public-house for the

night. As I came out, it was a great consolation to me to think that there are not many such places in London. The style of men thus created are, I fear, neither useful nor ornamental. They have a nasty ticket-of-leave look, and I would fain dispense with their company in quiet back streets during the small hours. One other thought may console you ; the sporting public-house, once popular, now attracts but a few, and that few a weak and vicious class. Is not this matter of encouragement ?

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE WITH A BILLIARD-ROOM

Is a great attraction in some places. We knew a whole town upset by the fact that the landlord of the "Swan" had fitted up a billiard-room. I and Wiggins and Foley and Jobson spent at one time, I regret to say, a good deal of time there. I am warning the reader against the follies of my youth ; but Foley failed, and Jobson and Wiggins, after having had their debts paid three or four times by their friends, I believe are now following that eminently healthy occupation called gold-digging, somewhere in Australia. Then I think of that little town in South Wales, and of the "Angel," under whose too hospitable roof we used to meet. One of us was an M.P.'s son ; he is now, I believe, dragging down a father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Another of us bore a name dear to every Englishman ; he, I believe, is pensioned off by his family, and lives as he can on the

handsome allowance of a guinea a-week. But these London billiard-rooms are fifty times more pernicious. There are some five or six hundred connected with public-houses. There are in all our large thoroughfares separate rooms licensed for this game, but at these drinking often goes on. And thus the two excitements acting on the man, he is impelled downwards with an increasing power. I have seen in these rooms officers and secretaries of public companies in a night losing, I am sure, a quarter's salary. I have seen young fellows completely ruined. There was not, when I first knew him, a more promising, gentlemanly young fellow than Smethwicke, and now, they tell me, he is in Marylebone Workhouse.

We are told that men are grown-up children. This saying forcibly occurred to me the last time I was in a billiard-room. After I had recovered from the feeling of suffocation which an atmosphere infected by gas and smoke had produced, I observed a number of men with long sticks trying to knock a number of various-coloured balls into any of the six pockets of the billiard-table. At each unsuccessful attempt a chorus of observations were made by the players, not

remarkable for their novelty, for the vocabulary of the billiard-room is very limited, such as "Not within a mile"—"I did n't play for you, Bob"—"It smelt the hole," &c., &c. At each successful attempt the chorus was still more animated, but not more original, as "Good stroke"—"Bad flewke"—"On the red," &c., &c. The game that was being played was called "pool." A number of people put each 2s. or 3s., as they may choose to arrange it, and they have each a ball of a different colour—red, blue, pink, yellow, white, brown, black. Each player has what is called three lives, and each time he is put in by a player—for they play in turn—he pays sixpence or a shilling, according to arrangement, and loses a life, whilst the successful player is allowed to play again upon the ball which happens to be nearest. The money in the pool is ultimately divided between the two players who have kept their three lives the longest. It will be seen that, if everything is straightforward, the best player has the best chance of dividing the pool or taking the lives. But, unhappily, this game, so child-like in appearance, is not always innocent. It may happen two players, gifted by nature with conveniently elastic con-

sciences, and a very confused notion of right and wrong, may arrange when they play upon each other to purposely avoid putting the ball in. Of course, each time this omission is made it is equal to the owner of the ball having an extra life, and of course makes the division of the pool almost a certainty. Perhaps at the end of the evening the two gentlemen, "who merely play for their amusement," may be seen under a lamp-post dividing the spoil. The other games are pyramids and billiards, which it is unnecessary to describe. I will simply remark that the best player should win the game; but this is not always the case. Alas! for human nature! Sharps lose to win; muffs win to lose (the term "muff" is applied to an indifferent player). After this not very flattering description the reader would doubtless like to know who frequent these places. A very large majority are gentlemen—men who are perfectly incapable of doing anything but what is strictly honest; the minority are billiard sharks. The gentlemen play because it is a source of excitement; the sharks, because it is a source of profit. There are also some who play only for amusement with gentlemen like themselves, and never risk be-

yond a shilling or so ; and others, mere lookers on, who, fatigued by their daily labours, prefer a *dolce far niente* to the trouble of theatres, &c., and who read the paper, drink their brandy and water, and smoke their cigar, without either playing or making a bet.

It is not easier to distinguish a gentleman in a billiard-room than elsewhere, but without wishing to be personal, it is desirable the stranger should keep at a distance those individuals who are so very familiar and friendly with every one, and who keep a piece of chalk in their waistcoat pocket. These people cannot be insulted ; they carefully avoid squabbles, which may bring about disagreeable insinuations ; they prefer pursuing the even tenor of their way, " picking up " as many people as they can. See yonder old man who totters across the room ; his trade is swindling, his goods are lies, his recreation is obscenity and blasphemy ; his palsied hand can scarcely grasp a cue, and yet there are few who can excel him ; by concealing his game carefully he has won, and can win hundreds, from his victims, who, thinking nothing of his skill, are astonished, as he pretends to be himself, at his *luck*. The young wife tossing restlessly in her

bed, and wondering what can keep her lord so long at *business*, little knows, when he returns home flushed and excited, that he has been fleeced of money he can ill afford to lose, whilst the sharer of the domestic joys of the billiard shark basks in the sunshine of his momentary good humour as he displays with a sardonic smile the gold which perhaps never belonged to the dupe who lost it. But the night is closing on us; we have seen enough for once. Come away.

THE RESPECTABLE PUBLIC-HOUSE

Is situated in one of the leading thoroughfares, and is decorated in an exceedingly handsome manner. The furniture is all new and beautifully polished, the seats are generally exquisitely soft and covered with crimson velvet, the walls are ornamented with pictures and pier-glasses, and the ceiling is adorned in a manner costly and rare. Such places as Simpson's or Campbell's in Beak-street, or Nell Gwynn's, almost rival the clubs, and, indeed, are much smarter than anything they can show at the Milton. Time was when men were partial to the sanded floor, the plain furniture, the homely style of such places as Dolly's, the London Coffee-house, or the Cock, to which Tennyson has lent the glory of his name. Now the love of show is cultivated to an alarming extent. "Let us be genteel or die," said Mrs. Nickleby, and her spirit surrounds us everywhere. Hence the splendour of the drinking-rooms of the metropo-

lis, and the studied deportment of the waiters, and the subdued awe with which Young Norvals fresh from the Grampian Hills and their fathers' flocks tread the costly carpets or sprawl their long legs beneath glittering mahogany.

Let us suppose it is about nine or ten in the evening, and we step into one of the numerous establishments which are to the respectable classes what the gin-palace and the beer-house is supposed to be to the class who are not. The reader must pardon my use of the word respectable. It is a word which, from my heart, I abhor, and, as it is commonly employed, merely denotes that a man has an account at a bank. There are but two ways in which human actions can be contemplated—the worldly and the philosophical or Christian. I use the term respectable merely in its worldly acceptation, but I skip this digression and pass on. Undoubtedly at the first blush it is a cheerful scene that first meets our eye. In this box are two or three old friends discussing a bottle of claret, who have not met perhaps since bright and boisterous boyhood, and who may never meet again. Of what manly struggle, of what sorrow that can never die, of what calm pleasures and chastened hopes, have

they to tell ! No wonder that you see the tear glistening in the eye, though there is laughter on the lip. Pass on ; here are some bagsmen red with port, and redolent of slang. In the next box are three or four young fellows drinking whisky and smoking cigars, and of course their talk is of wine and women ; but there is hope, nevertheless, for woman is still to them a something divine, and the evil days have not come when they see in her nothing but common clay. Look at this retired old gentleman of the old school sitting by himself alone ; yet is he not alone, for as he sips his port memories thicken in his brain, of ancient cronies now sleeping in churchyards far away, of a sainted wife no longer a denizen of this dark world of sin, of daughters with laughing children round their knees, all rosy and chubby and flaxen-haired, of sons with Anglo-Saxon energy and faith planting the old race on a new soil. Cross to this other side and look at these reckless, dissipated fellows, whom the waiter has just respectfully requested not to make so much noise, as it disturbs the other gentlemen in the room. Possibly they are Joint Stock Bank directors or railway officials, and after a few years it will be found that for their revelry to-

night a deluded public will have to pay. Here are a host of city merchants discussing politics, and it is wonderful how common-place is their conversation under the influence of alcohol.

"Palmerston is a great man, by —, he is a great man, sir," says one. "Yes, and no mistake," is the reply. "There is no humbug about Palmerston," says another. And so they ring the changes, originating nothing, gaining nothing, only getting redder in the face and more indistinct in their pronunciation. At length they button over their great coats, pay their bills, and generally, very good-naturedly, but very unsteadily, steer towards the door. It may be that a noisy discussion takes place. One man a little more gone than the rest disturbs the harmony of the evening by his flat contradictions, uttered somewhat too rudely, and backed by a blow from the fist on the table, which breaks a couple of glasses. But next morning he apologizes; "It was only my wine contradicting your wine," he says, without any sense of shame. But this rarely happens. The respectable classes have more command of their temper, and do not get so idiotically drunk as the frequenters of low public-houses, and so the *habitués* are in no

hurry to move and leave the light and luxurious room for the muddy streets and the winter night. But they must do so, and young men with their passions unnaturally stimulated, and the conscience proportionately deadened, are left to the temptations which await men who are out in the small hours; and old fogies, believing that if they go to bed mellow, they live as they ought to live, and die jolly fellows, find their way to their respective dwelling-places in a state as lamentable as it is degrading. Yet next Sunday you will see these men at church, and hear them joining in solemn and contrite prayer. Do they think these purple faces tell no tales? Do they think it is only the wife knows how they drink—in respectable company—in respectable hotels? Do they forget that in the midst of their revelry, under the flaming chandeliers, peering over the shoulders of courteous waiters, listening to their vinous laughter and ancient jokes, Death, with his dart, is there? Ay, and one night he will ride home with his victim in the Hansom, and will see him placed, all smelling with drink and under its influence, in the bed, side by side with his wife, and next morning she will as usual give her husband the seidlitz powder or soda-

water, and leave him to sleep for a short while longer, and when she comes back will find that his is the sleep which knows no waking. And then the inquest will be held—and a medical man will perplex a plain case with useless show of knowledge, and a jury will return a verdict of “Death from natural causes.” You and I know better—you and I know that if the man had not gone into the respectable public-house he might have lived another ten years—that it was because he went there night after night, and sat soaking there night after night, that the blood-vessels became gorged and clotted, and that the wonderful machine stood still. “Poisoned by alcohol” is the true verdict—by alcohol sold and consumed in the respectable public-house. How long will society sanction such places? How long will they retard the progress of the nation by wasting energies, and time, and cash, and opportunities that might have been devoted to nobler ends? How long with their splendour—with their gilding and glass—with their air of respectability and comfort, will they attract the unwary, ruin the weak, and slay the strong man in his strength and pride?

THE NIGHT-HOUSE

HAS, I confess, and I am glad to do so, lost somewhat of its popularity in latter years. At one time it was common everywhere; now it is in only a few streets that it exists and pollutes the atmosphere. In the Strand, in the Haymarket, in Oxford-street, night-houses were numerous, but the one to which I more immediately refer was situated in the neighbourhood of Tottenham-court-road. Since then, Mr. Spurgeon has been preaching in that locality, but I dare say the night-house exists nevertheless.

Let us suppose it is about two in the morning, and with the exception of one or two amiable garotters, a few sleepy police, and some three or four women, the regular population of the neighbourhood may be safely considered to have been long in bed. The gas-lamps shine almost exclusively on yourself. You look up at the windows and you see no lights save where, perhaps, poverty may be stitching for bread, or where

Death may have come an unbidden guest and borne away the fairest and the best beloved. At this hour the young bride in all her beauty may be struck down in mortal agony, or the wee pet lamb, whose little silver laugh had so often dispelled the dark cloud that gathered round the home, or the grey-haired man, having just reached the goal, and achieved an independence, may find himself left in this bleak, dark, wide world alone.

Leaves have their time to fall,

And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,

And stars to set; but all—

Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death.

And now let us forget all this, and knock at this door, above which streams a mellow light, and from which we hear sounds of boisterous gaiety. Is it not open yet? Then give another rap. Ah, it is all right now. "Take care of your pockets," says Cerberus, in a low voice,— "there are some rum blokes here." We will, my friend.

Yes, they must be rum blokes who come here into this filthy, stinking shop, and amongst this filthy, ragged, swearing crew of reprobates. If you wish to see a set of fellows whose mere looks

would hang them, I think they are about us now. Even the landlord seems uncomfortable in their presence, and wisely allows as little as possible of temptation in his house or on his person. He knows, I believe, they would as soon rob him as any one else, and his small ferret eyes are evidently wide awake. Indeed, none of the party look as if they had much honest sleep, and in the daylight, I imagine, would present a somewhat seedy appearance. We generally think cabmen not scrupulously honest, but perhaps these cabmen, with ancient great coats and well muffled up, are the honestest fellows here. Then of course there is an Irish "widder," with melancholy face and a string of ballads, such as "Mary Blane," "The Red, White, and Blue," "Cheer, boys, cheer," all of which she is willing to dispose of on the most reasonable terms. A decayed swell, probably a railway director in the great year of bubbles, with extraordinary sponges—an article I should have thought quite as unsaleable as soap to the *habitués*,—and a jockey-like looking person with knives with most wonderful and unaccountable blades, or with some fancy work-boxes or other articles equally ingenious and useless. Women are here,

of course, in the last stage of their profligate career, driven out of decent houses, unfit to associate with the well-dressed and the young—wrinkled, repulsive, red. As you see them drink, quarrelling, screaming, and cursing, as they always do till turned out to go God knows where, can you imagine that the difference between them and your own mother is merely that of circumstance, and education, and habit?—perhaps merely the difference produced by drink. I can tell you that little hag was once a rich man's leman, and robed herself in silk and satin, and quaffed her costly wine; and now hark how piteously she begs a drop of gin, ere she staggers to her wretched garret and straw to dream of a youth and gaiety now no longer hers. Here she has warmth, light, and society, and the night-house exists for such as she; and if, as is quite as likely as not, she is in league with some of the men around us, here she brings her victim, and then, stupified by drink, she has only to decoy him down some dark passage, and he becomes an easy prey to the sneaking thief who comes skulking up behind. But let us listen—

“Me and my pal we was a-going along the Hedgware-road, and we sor”—

"Hold your tongue," is the courteous reply.

"What do you mean by making all this row?" cries the landlord, with a horrid oath.

"Now, then, old buffer, another quartern of gin."

"And a screw of tobacco, master, if you please."

"Well, old gal, what'll you drink?"

"Well, I don't mind, what'll you stand?"

"Suppose we has arf and arf."

"Ay, to be sure."

And so the hours pass, and the place gets hotter, and stinks more and more every hour, for the men and women have not a very pleasant effluvium, and the hubbub becomes more intense. You tell me you would rather not stay here long. Well, I am quite of your opinion, for a couple of gentlemen with pale faces have been eyeing us most attentively ever since we have been here, and I confess their appearance is not prepossessing. Their short hair seems to indicate an acquaintance with one of the public establishments of the metropolis, with whose inmates it is not well to be too familiar. They are dressed in fustian, with thick boots well studded with nails, a kick from which on the head when a

man is down would soon settle his business ; and with their close-fitting caps, Belcher handkerchiefs, and heavy animal faces, are certainly not very pleasant-looking young men. I should be sorry to intimate my suspicions to them, as they may be noblemen in disguise, and might feel hurt at my want of charity. In the mean while, as the door is being opened and the coast is clear, I avail myself of the opportunity, and leaving the night-house, am soon dreaming in my feverish slumber that I have just been garotted and left for dead at the door of my domestic establishment, to the intense agony of my wife and children,—of course, by the two amiable young people aforesaid,—and I feel for some days after as if I had suffered terribly from a species of night-mare. So hideous is the life, so degraded the company, so revolting are the scenes, at these night-houses, I know not why the law permits them to be open. I am sure they can answer no good or moral end. Mr. Norton, a few days since, said, in deciding a case at the Lambeth police-office, he hoped a law would soon be passed to close night-houses. On this head the police magistrates are unanimous.

THE MUSIC HALL, HUNGERFORD MARKET.

IF you have ever travelled by the Camden Town busses to the Strand, or have ever visited on a tour of inspection the Suspension Bridge, or voyaged, as business or pleasure dictated, to Gravesend, or Greenwich, or Kew, or Cremorne, Hungerford Market must have attracted your inquiring eye. It is a place well known to the Cockney—not so much on account of its importance, though it drives a considerable trade in periwinkles and shrimps, but as a great depôt for passengers going by the boats or taking the overland route towards Camden Town. The place seems accordant with its fugitive population. In the evening it is quiet as the grave. On a fine day, especially on a Sunday, it swarms with life, and the shops and buildings have a similar transient appearance. You pass, if you enter from the Strand, a spacious hall, now to be let—a hall which has made several vain attempts

to get a livelihood, but which now seems to have given up the effort in despair. At one time it was a mesmeric saloon; then it became a registration and advertisement agency; and now it waits the avatar of the coming man. A grand dining company is hinted at, but the public has lost confidence in companies. As you proceed, you get into the market. On one side of you are the shops of fruiterers, and poulterers, and fishmongers; on the other, works of art of various degrees of badness, and at the corner is the great establishment for the manufacture and sale of penny ices. Instead of paying a half-penny and passing over the bridge, if you turn sharp round and dive down a flight of stairs, and deposit threepence with the door-keeper as the fee for admission, you will find yourself in the new Music Hall, Hungerford Market, licensed pursuant to Act of Parliament, and which is open every evening for the performance of madrigals, solos, duets, choruses, and glees. I am happy to have it in my power to announce that the following eminent vocalists are permanently engaged: Miss M'Gregor, Miss Seyfried, Miss Evans, Master Calcott, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Tolmain, Mr. Gray, Mr. Huish,

Mr. George Ford, the arranger and adapter of Hood and Ingoldsby's Poems, and Mr. Harry Fulford, the celebrated comic singer; grand pianoforte (Broadwood's), Mr. C. Anderson; accordion and organ-tina, Herr Knope; musical director, Mr. Thomas. On the night of my visiting the place there might have been above a hundred and fifty persons there; the hall seemed about half full. On each side of the room were highly-coloured paintings, representing Alma, Sebastopol, Inkermann, and Balaklava, and before me was the stage. The audience consisted chiefly of young persons of both sexes, and while the males had each their yard of clay, the ladies indulged in bottled stout. One or two awful young swells with excruciating all-rounders were present, but they, though they were evidently got up on economical principles, notwithstanding the general splendour of their appearance, were not in keeping with the character of the place, which a candid regard to truth compels me to denominate as seedy, to say nothing of the damp, tunnel-like atmosphere which not even the fumes of tobacco and grog and gas could overpower. At each end of the stage is a little box; on one side the ladies are

penned, on the other the gentlemen. This is a wise arrangement; but as the curtains are rather scanty, the worst of it is you see the comic singers combing their hair and performing other acts of the toilette—but possibly this may be intended as parts of the performance; if so, it is original, if it be not very entertaining. When I went in, a man dressed as one of the Ragged-school Brigade was creating great amusement by asking conundrums, as, What country had the largest capital in the world?—Ireland, because it was always a Dublin. Then he dived down into the little red-curtained crib, and came out again in a new character. This time he had a suit of black and a long conical hat and broad brim, like that worn by our Puritan forefathers, and he delivered a serio-comic lecture, in a tone of voice much patronized at the minor theatres, upon Money, more remarkable for its attempt at wit than for its success. However, it took with the audience. After the comic singer had done his part, a gent with a black beard gave us what I suppose would be denominated a spirited and patriotic war song, in which I was greatly surprised by an allusion to the “red cross flag of England,” a flag which I thought had disap-

peared from the seas since the days of Cromwell and Blake ; the gent was encored, and sang another song, and then we had a pale-faced female in blue asking " Why do I weep ? " till every one grew dismal, and, as a lady near me observed, quite " mel-an-cor-ly." Miss sat down, having received one cry of " ankore," which helped in some manner to revive the spirit of the audience ; and then we had another comic singer, whose comicality consisted, like that of the other, chiefly in his getting up. The dress was vastly funny ; of course it began with a white hat knocked in at the crown, then the coat, a brown one, had the smallest and most ridiculous-looking of tails, then the waistcoat was seedy and gorgeous at once, and the trowsers were white, with a stripe, and, of course, too short by some inches. Then the funny individual held a stick in a most comical manner, and walked as only comic actors on the stage do walk. He gave us a lecture on matrimony ; it was a capital thing, he said in the beginning, but the tenor of his remarks was certainly not in favour of the domestic institution. No doubt this was vastly funny, evidently the audience thought so, for every one tittered. I cannot say

that I was of a similar opinion, so I turned over a selection of words of the madrigals, glees, and choruses sung. In a hall where drinking was going on, and where, I imagine, the chief part of the profit was made of it, I was not surprised to find one asserting that—

“ Mynheer Vandunck, though he never was drunk,
Sipped brandy-and-water gaily,
And he quench'd his thirst in two quarts of the first,
To a pint of the latter daily ;
Singing ‘ O that a Dutchman’s draught could be
Deep as the rolling Zuyder Zee.’ ”

Another example of pandering to intemperance was afforded in a glee. Is it well or wise that young lads just emancipated from home and its safeguards should learn that drinking and love and joy are sworn friends, and that they walk through the world hand in hand ? they will not find it so in real life. Yet what else do the following stanzas teach ?—

“ Now, boys, we’ve met to-night, rosy hours to borrow :
See the wine is sparkling bright, away with care and sorrow.
Here will we sit awhile, quaffing brightest sherry,
And so the time beguile, making life thus merry ;
Let each man toast a pretty lass, to mine I drink most gladly,
Wing’d Cupid’s in the glass, and sits there sighing sadly ;
Now drink, boys, drink, hurrah—hip—hip—hurrah !
Now, boys, we’ve met, &c.”

Another popular song in the Hungerford Music Hall is this :

“ Come, boys, drink and merry be,
The wine-cup drain,
Send the sparkling nectar round,
Fill, fill again, ho ! ho !
Zum, zum, zum, dy del dee, dy del dee,
Zum, zum, zum, let’s merry be.

Care and sorrow hence away
Far shall flee ;
Here what should they do, I pray
With you or me, ho ! ho !
Zum, zum, zum, dy del dee, dy del dee,
Zum, zum, zum, let’s merry be.

Let the generous heart draw near,
And share our glee ;
He who means us well we cheer,
With three times three, ho ! ho !
Zum, zum, zum, dy del dee, dy del dee,
We’ll drink his health right heartily.

The following is an allusion which will not, I imagine, be very acceptable to the religious reader :—

“ St. Paul was once a rare M. D. ; he gave advice to Timothy—
Thy stomach weak to keep from aching use only wine,
Thy thirst when slaking ;—he is the man to suit us all,—
Hurrah for doctors like St. Paul.”

I cannot understand what poetry or music gains by falsehood. Yet I learn at the Hungerford Music Hall that—

“ In the merry old times of our ancestors,
 When the Saxons and Danes ruled here,
 They feasted right well, as their chronicles tell,
 And got drunk every day in the year,
 In the merry old times,
 In the merry old times,
 In the merry, merry, merry old times.”

Need the amusements of our leisure hours be thus based on false principles? Cambridge, in one of the pleasantest papers in the “ World,” says, “ Among the numbers who have changed a sober plan of living for one of riot and excess, the greatest part have been converted by the arguments in a drinking song.” Life is real, life is earnest. It is a battle-ground which requires heart and muscle, and where only the brave can conquer; but if I drop for half-an-hour into a music hall, I learn that pleasure is the great aim of life, and that gin can make me jolly and a genius.

HIGHBURY BARN.

A WRITER in *Chambers's Journal* some time since called attention to the peculiar attractions of Highbury Barn. What are these attractions? I confess that the place has connected it with the eating and drinking associations of years; that here generations of cockneys have dined; that here, Sunday after Sunday, they have come to drink bottled stout and smoke; that it is extensively patronized by shopmen and milliners; that the society is not of the most refined order; and that the love made in it is not of the noblest and purest character. I cannot understand how *Chambers* could have been got to puff up such a place to the public. I am sure the decent public will not thank *Chambers* for the puff.

Highbury Barn is an admirable illustration of the way in which Acts of Parliament are evaded. In 1852 Mr. Hinton applied for and obtained a license for music, and he stated in his petition on that occasion, that his object was to have the

license as an adjunct to dinner-parties, a great number of which were held there ; and at that time he had no idea whatever of having dancing in the place. In 1854, however, a different state of things arose, and, from a combination of causes, the parties and festivals at Highbury Barn fell off, and competition was so great, that Mr. Hinton having a large establishment, in which a great deal of capital was invested, was compelled to do something to meet the public taste, as he says, or, as I might say, to create it. Accordingly, on Whit Monday of that year, he opened his establishment for musical entertainments with the band of the Grenadier Guards. This was considered by the magistrates as an infraction of his agreement with them, and his license was refused. But Mr. Hinton was not beaten ; he had his large capital invested, and somehow or other the public must be got into his house. An ingenious plan was devised, by which Mr. Hinton was enabled to carry on his music and dancing without a license, and yet be secure from the penalties incurred by the breakers of law. There is an assembly called Almack's, frequented by the *élite* of the land, held in Willis's Rooms. Those rooms are not

licensed according to Act of Parliament, yet all the leaders of *bon ton* there congregate, and they would be liable to be taken up as rogues and vagabonds under the Act. But the dancing is carried on there by an association, under the auspices of which tickets are sold. Well, Mr. Hinton adopted a similar plan. The Highbury Club was formed, and the club kindly provided the youthful votaries of pleasure with the desired amusement. If we are to believe Mr. Hinton, the result has not been very advantageous, as his receipts on the sale of alcoholic liquors fell off £600—a statement rather difficult to reconcile with his former one, that he found his customers had left him, and that he must do something to call them back. Be that as it may, Mr. Hinton has now his license, though three clergymen connected with the district concurred in stating that parties on leaving the Barn were disorderly and riotous, and disturbed the quiet of the locality, and that the licensing of that establishment would have a very demoralizing effect.

And now let us go to Highbury Barn. As we walk alone Highbury-place, we pass by many a father of a family grumbling at the idea of hav-

ing his quiet invaded by parties coming home from the Barn ; and yet there was a time, probably, when he heard the chimes at midnight ; and the chances are, so wretchedly are our lads educated, that while the father is at home reading his religious magazine, the son is being initiated into fast life at the Barn. But on we go through a dark passage, admirably adapted for a garotte walk, till we come to the place of rendezvous. We pay sixpence and walk in. The first thing that strikes us is the Master of the Ceremonies. We are amazed,—in the distant West never have we met a more distinguished swell. His attitude is faultless ; his raven hair is parted in the middle ; his dark eye is turned in a languishing manner upward to the orchestra. In the intervals between the dances he walks up and down the room in an abstract and poetic manner, and Melancholy marks him for her own. You believe in the doctrine of metamorphoses as you look at him. He is a star fallen upon evil days. Beneath that faultless black dress-coat there lies the soul of a Beau Brummel or a Nash. Well, then, may there be a tinge of sadness on his cheek, and a cloud upon his brow. But let us leave him awhile and look about us. What

a noble room ! we shall not see a finer one in London. At one end is a gallery ; at the other a raised platform with very comfortable seats and tables. All round the room are illustrations of oriental scenery, and over the bar is the orchestra. But the place is not so crowded as we might expect, and the visitors are quieter than in the casinos of the West ; the men and women are most of them much younger,—the men, many of them, have an exceedingly juvenile appearance, and think it fine to dance with young ladies of uncertain occupations, and to drink brandy-and-water and smoke cigars ; but they have yet to cut their wisdom-teeth. As Thackeray says,

“ Pretty page with the dimpled chin,
That never has known the barber’s shear,
All your wish is woman to win ;
This is the way that boys begin,—
Wait till you come to forty year.”

Come here in the summer-time, and the attendance is then numerous ; and of a Sunday evening, on the lawn before the Barn, or in the bowers and alcoves by its side, what vows have been uttered only to be broken ; and what snares have been set for youth, and beauty, and innocence ; and how many have come here with gay

hearts who have left with them bruised beyond the power of man to heal! Even in this room itself, what changes have been wrought by the magic hand of time! Where are the Finsbury radicals—all beery and Chartist, who here dined; the demagogues who duped them, the hopes they cherished, the promises they made? One after another have the bubbles burst, have the leaders palpably become shams, have the people woke up to disappointment and despair; and yet the nation has yet to learn that it is only by individual righteousness its salvation can be wrought. The dancing, instead of speech-making, is a sign of the times. Accompanied as it is by less drinking, let us hope it is a favourable sign. Let us judge in the spirit of charity and hope. But let us not be too sanguine,—it was during the terrors of the French Directory, when the

“Streets ran so red with the blood of the dead
That they blush’d like the waves of hell,”

that Paris became a city of dancers, and that the art reached a climax unknown before or since.

BOXING NIGHT.

I AM rather out of conceit with Christmas boxes. I have been wished the compliments of the season by no less than six individuals this very morning, and for those good wishes I, poor man though I be, with family of my own to work for, have had to pay half-a-crown each. I grow suspicious of every smiling face I meet. I walk with my hands in my pocket, and my eyes cast down. I wonder how it fares with my strong-minded wife at home. I know she will have had a rare battle to fight. She will have had the Postman—and the Dustman—and the Waits—and the Sweep—and the Turncock—and the Lamplighter—and the Grocer's lad—and the Butcher's boy; and if she compounds with them at the rate of a shilling a-piece, she may bless her stars. I feel that I cannot stand much of this kind of work, and that for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year I shall have to pay rather handsomely. Stop at home—tie up your

knockers—say you are sick or dead, or a shareholder in the Royal British Bank, still you cannot escape the tender mercies of a London Boxing-day. Mind, I have not one word to say of the various good wishes and gifts offered by friends and relatives to each other as pledges of esteem and goodwill. I would be the last to find fault with the customs originating in the warm heart of love, and honoured by the sanction of the whole civilized world. By all means let us reverence them ten-fold. But I have a right to complain that I am compelled to pay for mercenary goodwill, and that on me, or such as me, a tax is levied which does no good in most cases, and frequently does an immense amount of harm. When I read, as I am sure to do, in the police reports of the next day, that, “yesterday, being the day after Boxing day, the time of the magistrates was chiefly occupied with cases of drunkenness,” am I not right in wishing that I had kept the money in my own pocket? Some of my friends would do that, but then for the next twelve months they are hampered and inconvenienced in a thousand ways. As a wise man, I choose the least of two evils, but I am an unwilling victim nevertheless.

But a truce to my meditations; let us look at London on a Boxing night. By daylight you would scarce know London. A new race seems to have invaded the streets, filled the omnibuses, swarmed in the bazaars and the Arcade, choked up the eating-houses and the beer-shops. Smith with his Balmoral boots, Brown with his all-round collar, Jones with his Noah's Ark coat, Robinson with the straight tile, which young England deems the cheese, delight us no more with their snobby appearance and gentish airs; to-day this is the poor man's holiday. You can tell him by the awkwardness with which he wears his Sunday clothes, by the startling colour of his ties, by the audacious appearance of his waistcoat. If he would only dress as a gentleman dresses, he would look as well, but he must be fine. Well, it matters little so long as he be happy, whether he is so or not; and let him pass with his wife and children, all full of wonder and delight as they stare in at the shop windows and think everything—how happy are they in the delusion!—that all that glitter is gold. Let us wish them a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

And now the dull, dark day, by the magic power of gas, has been transformed into gay and

brilliant night. The thousands who have spent the day sight-seeing are not satiated, and are flocking round the entrances of the various theatres. Let us stand on the stage of the Victoria, and see them to the number of fifteen hundred mounted upon the gallery benches. Through the small door near the ceiling they come down like a Niagara, and you expect to see them hurled by hundreds into the pit. What a Babel of sounds ! It is in vain one cries "Horder !" "'Ats off !" "Down in front !" "Silence !" Boys in the gallery are throwing orange peel all over the pit ; Smith halloos to Brown, and Brown to Smith ; a sailor in a private box recognises some comrades beneath, and immediately a conversation ensues ; rivals meet and quarrel ; women treat each other to the contents of their baskets—full of undigestible articles, you may be sure, with a bottle of gin in the corner. The play—it is that refreshing drama, the "Battersea Brigand"—proceeds in dumb-show ; but the pantomime, the subject of which is, "Wine, War, and Love, and Queen Virtue in the Vistas of Light or Glitter,"—with what a breathless calm that is ushered in. It is an old silly affair. Harlequin, clown, and

pantaloon, are they not all very dreary in their mirth? Yet the audience is in a roar of laughter, and little babes clap their tiny hands, and tears of laughter chase each other down the withered cheeks of age. This night in every theatre of London is a similar scene witnessed. The British public is supposed to be unusually weak at Christmas, and tricks that were childish and stale when George the Third was king, and jokes venerable even in Joe Miller's time, are still supposed to afford the most uproarious amusement to a people boasting its Christianity, its civilisation, and enlightenment. Of all conventionalisms those of the stage are the most rigid, antiquated, and absurd.

But the thousands outside who did not get in—what are they about? Look at that respectable mechanic; you saw him in the morning as happy as a prince, and almost as fine; he stands leaning against the lamp-post, apparently an idiot. His hat is broken—his coat is torn—his face is bloody—his pockets are empty; not a friend is near, and he is far away from home. It is clear too what he has been about. Come on a few steps further—three policemen are carrying a woman to Bow-street. A hooting crowd

follow ; she heeds them not, nor cares she that she has lost her bonnet—that her hair streams loosely in the wind—that her gown (it is her Sunday one) is all torn to tatters—or that her person is rudely exposed. The further we go, and the later it grows, the more of these sad pictures shall we see. Of course we do not look for such in Regent-street, or Belgravia, or Oxford-street, or the Strand. Probably in them we shall meet respectable people staggering along under the influence of drink—but they are not noisy or obstreperous—they do not curse and swear—they do not require the aid of the police. We must go into the low neighbourhoods—into St. Giles', or Drury-lane, or Ratcliffe-highway, or the New-cut, or Whitechapel—if we would see the miseries of London on Boxing night. We must take our stand by some gin-palace. We must stay there till the crowds it has absorbed and poisoned are turned loose and maddened into the streets. Then what horrible scenes are realized. Here an Irish faction meet, and men, women, and children engage in a general *mêlée*, and cries of murder rend the air, and piercing shrieks vex the dull ear of night. There two mates are stripped and fighting, who but this morning

were bosom friends, and who to-morrow would not harm a hair of each other's heads. Here a mechanic with a bloody head is being borne to the neighbouring hospital, to lie there a few months at the public expense, while his family are maintained by the parish. Again, we meet two wives nursing young babes scared into unnatural silence, clenching their fists in each other's faces, and with difficulty restrained from acts of more savage violence by their drunken husbands. Their day's holiday has come to this. In the metropolis in 1853, the number of public-houses was 5,729—the number of beer-shops 3,613. These figures give a total of 9,342. If on this night we suppose on an average one fight in the course of the evening takes place in each of these drinking shops, we can get some idea of what goes on in London on a Boxing night. In passing at midnight down Drury-lane, I see three fights in a five minutes' walk. Enlightened native of Timbuctoo, will you not pity our London heathens and send a few missionaries here !

THE MOGUL,

Nor the Great Mogul in Thibet, but the Mogul in Drury-lane, is an increasingly popular place of public amusement. I was there a few years since, and it was not more than half full. The other night I could hardly get standing room, though I paid sixpence and went with the operative swells into the gallery. In these days the test of everything is success. We speak well of the tradesman who does the largest business—of the writer whose books sell the most—of the actor or preacher that draws the largest crowd. We do not stop to criticise the manner in which that business is done—the influence of the writer, the doctrine taught by the preacher, or the character of the acting. On the ordinary principle, then, the Mogul is a creditable establishment, for it is a successful one. Indeed, in the present state of society it is hardly possible to conceive how a place that combines entertainment and drinking together can well

be otherwise. In the course of last summer Vauxhall was open a few nights; I was credibly informed that on each night it was supposed not more than half the company paid for admission, the other half having been admitted by means of orders. It is calculated the sale of drink and refreshments to the crowd thus collected will yield a profit sufficient to cover all expenses. Thus is it such places as the Mogul pay. The entrance fee and the sale of intoxicating drinks must amount to a sum out of which a proprietor can extract a handsome profit.

Thus at the Mogul you have a double attraction. Are you a gin-drinker, you can go and get your quartern or half-quartern over the bar—or you can lounge into the concert-room and quietly sit soaking the whole evening; for, as the performance does not close till midnight, the time admits of a man getting “fou” between the commencement and the close of the entertainment. Drury-lane is what may be called a low neighbourhood, devoted principally to butchers’ and bakers’ shops, pawnbrokers’ establishments, and gin-palaces. Pass these latter any hour of the day you will, and you will find

them crowded by laundresses, and charwomen, and haggard old crones from the sister isle, and young wives whose husbands, it may be, are hard at work. There they stand in the streets, with babies in their arms and dirty children in rags by their side, gossiping with women as ill-conditioned as themselves; and as gossiping makes them thirsty, and as drinking makes people drunk, it is not difficult to imagine the state in which many of these women are. In the middle of the day it is very obvious that many of them have had more than enough. How they can afford it always puzzles me—I cannot, I know, and I believe my weekly earnings equal theirs. The pawnbrokers may help them—but their material guarantees cannot be perpetually forthcoming. These gin-drinkers live cheap, I grant. They herd in the horrid slums of Drury-lane—and people say sometimes, Can you wonder that such poor wretches drink? but they forget that it is the drink that makes them such poor wretches. The money these women spend in drink would pay for decent apartments and clothes that would be clean and comfortable, not ragged and filthy, and stinking with every abomination. It is not poverty that creates

drunkenness, but drunkenness that creates poverty, and the poverty thus created—the dreariest kind of all poverty—abounds in Drury-lane. Well, then, exclaims one of the new school, who believes mankind are to be regenerated by fiddling, does not such a place as the Mogul have a beneficial influence? I will answer this by describing the kind of amusement afforded at the Mogul. You are pent up in a room where the air is ten times worse than in any theatre—any crowded chapel—or worse than in the Reading Room of the British Museum or the House of Commons. You see a little of the worst acting in London—broad farce, chiefly by artists, if I may term them such, who are more remarkable for their weakness than their strength. “Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hands,” says Hamlet; but actors of the class you meet in the Mogul never seem to have heard of the Prince of Denmark. There are some people who doubt whether good acting has a beneficial effect, but there are none who doubt that the effect of bad

acting is altogether bad. But the dramatical part of the entertainment constitutes but a small part of the evening's amusement. There is a lady who sings sentimental songs, and a gentleman who sings comic ones, and another gent, with dismal voice and weary mien, who declares—

“The *gurls* of dear Old England
Are the *gurls* of *gurls* for me-e-eh.”

I am not aware that any of these performers sing songs of an objectionable character; and if a sneer is now and then introduced at what common decent people believe to be good, and true, and righteous, and of beneficial tendency, it is only, perhaps, such as would be approved of by the patrons of the Haymarket. You tell me that this is better than sitting all night at a bar drinking; but, I ask, is not this entertainment itself an excuse for drinking? You see the room is full of men and women evidently belonging to the working classes; now of all men working men can least afford to waste time in such places. All their future emphatically depends upon themselves. More than most men are they called upon to exercise self-denial and to cultivate their powers, if they would achieve inde-

pendence. But how can the working men who sit night after night in such places as the Mogul ever hope to rise? yet any night there must be a couple of hundred of such present, for they swarm like bees. They come professedly for the entertainment, but all the while it lasts they are doing a good deal in the drinking line. It is not one glass or two that will satisfy them; and the worst of it is, that many very clever fellows when once they begin drinking do not know when to leave off. In this respect they are like Dr. Johnson, who could either feast or fast, but could never be a moderate drinker. They come to the Mogul—perhaps they would never think of sitting all night in a public-house—but they come to the Mogul for the entertainment, and they finish by drinking as if they had come for the drink alone. The Mogul is indeed an educational establishment, but unfortunately it educes the wrong set of faculties. In Drury-lane, of all lanes in the world, there is the least occasion to associate intoxicating drink with happiness. Everywhere the idea is a mischievous delusion and a remnant of barbarism, but there it is a positive curse. At the Mogul you will see the sweetheart with her lover, the mother with

her child,—it may be the sucking babe,—till midnight breathing an air of tobacco smoke, the husband and the wife, all you say enjoying themselves in a social way, but all, I say, encouraging an appetite which, if it gets the mastery,—and in the majority of cases it does,—will destroy them without mercy. Were the Mogul simply a gin-palace, it would have far less patronage, it would merely have its share of the general trade; but the fact that it provides musical and dramatic entertainments—that it gives decent people an excuse for drinking—that it attracts those whom a common gin-shop would repel—is that precisely which gives it its power for danger. Such places are decoy shops, the more dangerous as drinking in Drury-lane is really disgusting, and enough to make a man a teetotaller for life. The neighbourhood is rich in warnings, but the *habitué* of the Mogul soon learns to heed them not.

CALDWELL'S.

A STRANGER, ignorant of our inner life, and unacquainted with our social system, knowing only that we call ourselves a Christian people, and that we boast that Christianity places woman in a peculiarly favoured position, might dwell among us for awhile, and, seeing how woman is flattered and followed, might imagine that our condition was perfect, and that here, at least, woman, the weak, was sheltered by man, the strong. In the dazzling ball-room—on the glittering promenade—he might meet the lovely and the fair, and deem that they were no brilliant exception, but as they were sheltered and loved, so were sheltered and loved all of their common sex. Grieved would he be to find out his mistake; yet more grieved would he be to know that the graceful drapery that added to the beauty that everywhere flashed upon his eye was wrought by tender and delicate women, who, pale and wan, slave at the needle from

morn till eve, and from eve till again the dim grey of morn gleamed in the east—by women withered before their prime—by women who, for no crime, but from their simple desire to live by the honest and honourable labour of their hands, are shut up in heated and unhealthy rooms, debarred from social duties and joys, and who know nothing of life but its wants and woes—by women who can find in slavery itself nothing more forlorn than their melancholy fate—by women to the majority of whom there is no honest way of escape from the lingering death that besets them, but the grave.

We would guard our readers against giving way to mawkish sentimentalism ; *that* it is not our aim to excite. There are employers who are all they should be ; there are milliners' and dressmakers' assistants who find their labour what all healthy labour is, a blessing, and not a curse. Nor is every dressmaker shut up in these hot-houses of disease beautiful, nor the daughter of one who has seen better days. It is true that some of these unfortunate girls are the daughters of "clergymen, medical men, and officers ;" but it is because they partake of our common humanity—because they have human

blood and human hearts—because life was given them that in it they might bless and be blessed—because, in their injuries and wrong, the human family and its Father above are injured and wronged—that we claim for them from society sympathy and redress. We say nothing of the moral danger to which, in a metropolis like this, they are peculiarly exposed. When sin offers so golden a bait, it shows that those who yet continue at their work deserve respect and aid. If some of them have fallen—if some of them, driven by despair, have walked our streets to gain their bread, let us blame the system which has made so infamous and wretched a mode of life seem a change to be desired. Let the cure be adopted ; let the work now done be distributed among a larger number of hands ; and in this country, at least, there is no lack of persons eager to be employed. In many of the fashionable establishments increased cost of production can be of but little moment. Let employers learn to practise humanity, and let our high-born and influential ladies see to it, that it is no thoughtlessness of theirs that compels their poorer sisters to toil with a sinking frame and a heavy heart. As a nation, we have worked out

one problem in civilization ; we have shown that the utmost wealth can exist side by side with the deepest poverty—the grossest ignorance with the most cultivated knowledge—the most elevating piety with the most debasing fetichism—the fairest virtue with the most revolting vice. Be it our nobler work to show to the nations of the earth how, while our higher classes live in refinement and wealth, there is no class, however humble, but can joy in the possession of social happiness and rights.

But what, you ask, has this to do with Caldwell's ? Only this, that of the class to which I have referred, I believe more may be found of an evening at Caldwell's than anywhere else in London. It is not all dressmakers who toil thus severely and unnaturally ; and few of them are there who do not in the course of the year find time to pay Caldwell's a visit. Who has not heard of Caldwell's *Soirées Dansantes* ? Are they not advertised in every paper ? Are they not posted in gigantic bills in every street ? In quiet country lanes, miles and miles away from town, do we not come across the coloured letters by which Mr. Caldwell announces his entertainment to the world ? Who is Mr. John Caldwell ?

We will let him speak for himself. He has an establishment in Dean-street, Soho. The building cost him nearly four thousand pounds. On boxing-night he had as many as 600 customers, "and on average nights," he tells us, "I have about 200." The charge for admission is eightpence. Mr. Caldwell has a public-house just by, and from that supplies wine, and ale, and spirits. "I have never had a case of drunkenness in my place for years; I am very particular—I never let a drunken man remain." On an average about thirty glasses of spirits are drunk in the dancing room in the course of an evening, and about forty glasses of beer. "I believe my place is carried on in as respectable a manner as can be. Some of the first noblemen come; there are some very respectable tradesmen round the neighbourhood, and a great many young people from the neighbourhood. The rooms are principally supported by the working classes." The dancing saloon opens at eight, and is closed at a quarter to twelve. Such is the evidence given by Mr. Caldwell himself before the select committee of the House of Commons on public-houses. As is perfectly natural, it is all *coleur de rose*. The union of the first noblemen

and the *élite* of the working classes over spirits-and-water, or in the mazy dance, is a beautiful specimen of fraternisation, and the small quantity of beer and spirits drunk by 200 persons indicates an amount of sobriety rare in places of public amusement. I think Mr. Caldwell has a little understated the case. I fear he forgot to tell the committee that the drinking at his place was in the refreshment-room down-stairs, not in the dancing-room above; while in the latter the small quantity he asserts is consumed, I am inclined to think, much more may be disposed of down-stairs. In the course of his own examination some disagreeable truths oozed out. We give a couple of questions and answers in proof of this:—Sir George Grey: “Do you mean to say that the dancing-saloon would have no sufficient attraction for the people unless there were connected with it the facility of obtaining spirituous liquors?” “*I think not; the people want a glass of wine, or negus, or brandy-and-water.*” Again, Mr. Caldwell has been unable to procure a license on account of the opposition of the publicans in the neighbourhood. The Chairman asks, “Do you think the publicans would withdraw their opposition?” “*Yes,*

they begin to find my house an advantage ; when parties leave my rooms, they stand together at the corner of the streets, and say, We will have a parting glass. They do not all have it at my rooms."

Now this answer does not well coincide with Mr. Caldwell's former evidence. It is quite as much the drink as the dancing that is the attraction, and as to his respectable tradesmen, and the fact of persons not being tipsy, and that of some of the first noblemen coming there, all these assertions are fairly open to criticism. It was only the other day I heard a London magistrate declare that publicans never could tell when a person was tipsy ; and as to respectability, your Robsons, and Camerons, and Sadleirs are always considered highly respectable. Ask the first person you meet about your neighbours. What is the answer ? Oh, they are a highly respectable family ; they are immensely rich. And as to noblemen coming into such places, I imagine that would be precisely the reason why the judicious father of a pretty girl would prefer her dancing anywhere rather than in Mr. Caldwell's establishment in Dean-street. I have not much faith in the benefits of that spe-

cies of the mixture of all ranks. Like the Irishman's reciprocity, it is all on one side. Tennyson makes his hero tell Lady Clara Vere de Vere—

“ At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare and I retired,—
The daughter of a hundred earls,
You are not one to be desired.”

But perchance a young maiden, led away by the excitement of the hour, could not find it in her heart to address similar language to Lady Clara Vere de Vere's brother. The last victim always believes that she is to be the exception to all general rules; she may transgress, but not pay the penalty—pluck the forbidden fruit, and for doing so not forfeit Eden—plunge wildly into sin, and sorrow, and shame, and yet find peace in her heart and the light of heaven lying on her path; but cause and effect are eternal, and, youth gone, and pleasure gone, and the power to attract gone, and the inward sense of right succeeded by the stings of conscience and the gnawing of remorse, what is left but to weep madly and in vain for

“ The tender grace of a day that is dead ? ”

But we are in Caldwell's,—let us go into the gallery and look down. I know not the name of the new dances, but how the women swim round the room, as the music now hurriedly hastens, now softly dies away. The girl that dances here so modestly to-night in twelve months will have lost her maiden shame, will be dressed in silks and satins, will be dancing at the Argyll, and supping at Scott's or Quin's. That girl they call Rose, and a rose she is, for she might shine in a Belgravian drawing-room, and walks in beauty as a fairy queen—might have lit up a home with her love, and made a brave heart proud; but here she comes, night after night, and domestic life is to her tame after music and dancing such as she has here. Beauty you will not find much of, nor that overdress which stamps the character of the women at the Casino or the Argyll in unmistakeable terms; and the men are the class you usually meet in these places. They may be pickpockets, or they may be peers; you can scarce tell the difference in these levelling days. If I had not Mr. Caldwell's express assertion to the contrary, I should certainly say that that young fellow with a pint bottle of champagne in his hand was decidedly drunk,—at any rate,

he has very much the appearance of a tipsy person ; but the waiters seem to be of Mr. Caldwell's opinion, and are still offering him more drink, and the women around seem to think it is rather fun than otherwise. Ah ! little do they reflect how such as he, under the influences of drink, forget the decencies of life, the claims of duty, forget even the common instincts of common humanity ; so that the wife, whom he has vowed to love, honour, and protect, is abandoned, and the home forsaken, for the orgies of the public-house. Do the women around us ever expect to be the wives and mothers of such, or have they, young and fair as many of them seem, learnt already that recklessness as to the future which robs life of all its glory, and incarcerates the soul in a living grave ? I can see, even here, a gaiety more sad than tears. But I need not continue my description ; dancing in public rooms in the metropolis is much the same everywhere. Of course the place is all that Mr. Caldwell says it is. I believe with him that it is as respectably conducted as establishments of the kind can be ; but at the same time Mr. Caldwell confesses it leads to drinking, and that is quite

reason enough, independently of other obvious considerations, why I come away thankful that no wife or sister of mine is amongst the parties nightly to be met at Mr. Caldwell's *soirées dansantes*.

CREMORNE.

“IN a set of pictures illustrative of Greek customs, it was quite impossible to leave out the *hetærae* who gave such a peculiar colouring to Grecian levity, and exercised so potent a sway over the life of the younger members of the community. Abundant materials for such a sketch exist, for the Greeks made no secret of matters of this kind; the difficulty has been not to sacrifice the vividness of the picture of the ordinary intercourse with these women to the demands of our modern sense of propriety,” says Professor Becker, in his truly admirable work on the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks. In the same manner, and for the same reason, the modern sense of propriety is supposed to be in the way of any very graphic description of Cremorne; yet we have *hetærae* almost as bewitching as Aspasia or the Corinthian Lais; and if our students, and learned clergy, and holy bishops write long articles about the Athenian Dionysia

only held once a year, why should we not speak of ours which last all the summer, and the scene of which is Cremorne? At the Dionysia the most unbridled merriment and drunkenness were the order of the day, and were held quite blameless. For a while the most sober-minded bade adieu to the stringency of habit, following the well-known Greek maxim—

“Ne’er blush with drink to spice the feast’s gay hour,
And, reeling, own the mighty wine-god’s power.”

So is it in Cremorne. If Corinth had her groves sacred to Aphrodite, so has Cremorne. It offends our modern sense of propriety to speak of such matters. English people only see what they wish to see. If you are true—if you look at real life and say what you think of it, you shock our modern sense of propriety. We may talk about drainage and ventilation, and the advantages of soap, but there we must stop. Keep the outside clean, but don’t look within. Thus is it our writers make such blunders. For instance, good-meaning Mrs. Stowe, after she had written *Uncle Tom*, came here to be lionized, and to write a book about us. She did so, and a very poor book it was. But I must quote one passage

from "Sunny Memories." In writing of a visit she paid to the Jardin Mobile in Paris, she writes, "Entrance to this Paradise can be had, for gentlemen a dollar, ladies *free*; this tells the whole story. Nevertheless, do not infer that there are not respectable ladies there; it is a place so remarkable that very few strangers stay long in Paris without taking a look at it. And though young ladies residing in Paris never go, and matrons very seldom, yet occasionally it is the case that some ladies of respectability look in. Nevertheless, aside from the impropriety inherent in the very nature of the waltzing, there was not a word, look, or gesture of immorality or impropriety. The dresses were all decent, and, if there was vice, it was vice masked under the guise of polite propriety. How different, I could not but reflect, is all this from the gin-palaces of London! There, there is indeed a dazzling splendour of gaslights, but there is nothing artistic, nothing refined, nothing appealing to the imagination. There are only hogsheads and barrels, and the appliances for serving out strong drink; and there for one sole end—the swallowing of the fiery stimulant—come the nightly thousands, from the gay and

well-dressed to the haggard and tattered, in the last stage of debasement. The end is the same, by how different paths ! Here they dance along the path to ruin with flowers and music—there they cast themselves bodily, as it were, into the lake of fire.” A more unfair comparison, I think, was never drawn ; a drinking-shop is much the same everywhere, and in Paris as well in London, people, to use Mrs. Stowe’s own words, cast themselves bodily into the lake of fire. We have our *Jardin Mobile*, but of course Mrs. Stowe never went there—as we have known good people confessing to entering theatres in Germany or France who on no account would have gone near one at home. If Mrs. Stowe had confessed to going to Cremorne, she would have been cut, and so she went to the Paris Cremorne instead ; but to write a true book on England, she should have gone to Cremorne. Look at Cremorne ; is it not one, as Disraeli is reported to have said, of the institutions of the country ? The gardens are beautiful, are kept in fine order, are adorned with really fine trees, and are watered by the Thames, here almost a silver stream. Though near London, on a summer evening the air is fresh and balmy, the amuse-

ments are varied, the company are genteel in appearance, and here, as in Paris, they dance along the path to ruin with flowers and music. If Mrs. Stowe gives the preference to the Parisians, she may be right, but I am inclined to dispute the grounds of that preference. The gin-palaces are filled with our sots, with our utter wrecks, with all that is loathsome and low in man or woman. Your son, fresh from home and its sacred influences, is shy of entering a gin-palace at first. He goes there with a blush upon his cheek, and a sense of shame at his heart. He shrinks from its foul companionship, and when he has come out he resolves never to be what he has seen under those accursed roofs. But you take him to Cremorne, or you send him to the Argyll Rooms, or the Holborn Casino, and he is surrounded by temptation that speaks to him with almost irresistible power. The women are well-dressed and well-behaved. The drink does not repel but merely stimulates the hot passions of youth and lulls the conscience. For one man that is ruined in a gin-shop there are twenty that are ruined at Cremorne.

As to the morality of such places, that is not to be settled dogmatically by me or by any one

else. Tennyson talks of men fighting their doubts, and gathering strength; in the same manner, men may fight temptation and gather strength, and one man may merely spend a pleasant evening where another may in the same interval of time ruin himself for life. The tares and the wheat, in this confused world of ours, grow side by side. Unnaturally, we bring up our sons only to pluck what we deem the wheat; and immediately they are left to themselves, they begin gathering the tares, which we have not taught them are such, and have for them at least the charm of novelty. It does not do to say there is no pleasure in the world; there is a great deal. The grass is green, though, it may be, sad sinners tread it. The sun shines as sweetly on carrion as on the Koh-i-noor. The lark high up at heaven's gate sings as loud a song of praise, whether villains or lovers listen to its lays. Places are what we make them. I fear there are many blackguards at Cremorne; the women most of them are undoubtedly hetæraæ, and yet what a place it is for fun! How jolly are all you meet! How innocent are all the amusements,—the ascent of the balloon—the dancing—the equestrian performances—the

comic song—the illuminations—the fire-works—the promenade on the grass lawn or in the gas-lit paths; the impulses that come to us in the warm breath of the summer eve, how grateful are they all, and what a change from Cheap-side or from noisy manufactories still more confined! By this light the scene is almost a fairy one. Can there be danger here? Is there here nothing artistic—nothing refined—nothing appealing to the imagination? Come here, Mrs. Stowe, and judge. You will scandalize, I know, that portion of the religious public that never yet has looked at man and society honestly in the face, but you will better understand the frightful hypocrisies of our domestic life; you will better understand how it is that a religion which we pay so much for, and to which we render so much outward homage, has so little hold upon the heart and life. There is no harm in Cremorne, if man is born merely to enjoy himself—to eat, drink, be merry, and die. I grant, it is rather inconvenient for a young man who has his way to fight in life to indulge a taste for pleasure, to launch out into expenses beyond his means, to mix with company that is more amusing than moral, and to keep late hours; and

young fellows who go to Cremorne must run all these risks. It may do you, my good sir, no harm to go there. You have arrived at an age when the gaieties of life have ceased to be dangerous. You come up by one of the Citizen boats to Chelsea after business hours, and stroll into the garden and view the balloon, or sit out the ballet, or gaze with a leaden eye upon the riders, and the clowns, and the dancing, or the fireworks, and return home in decent time to bed; and if you waste a pound or two, you can afford it. But it is otherwise with inflammable youth—a clerk, it may be, in a merchant's warehouse on 30s. a-week, and it is really alarming to think what excitements are thus held out to the passions, at all times so difficult to control. There are the North Woolwich Gardens—there is Highbury Barn—all rivalling Cremorne, and all capable of containing some thousands of idle pleasure-seekers. Vauxhall, with its drunken orgies, is gone never to return—the place that knows it now will know it no more for ever—but such places are what thoughtless people call respectable, are frequented by respectable people; and amidst mirth and music, foaming up in the sparkling wine, looking out of dark blue

eyes, reddening the freshest cheeks, and nestling in the richest curls, there lurks the great enemy of God and man. Young man, such an enemy you cannot resist ; your only refuge is in flight. Ah, you think that face fair as you ask its owner to drink with you ; it would have been fairer had it never gone to Cremorne. A father loved her as the apple of his eye ; she was the sole daughter of his home and heart, and here she comes night after night to drink and dance ; a few years hence and you shall meet her drinking and cursing in the lowest gin-palaces of St. Giles's, and the gay fast fellows around you now will be digging gold in Australia, or it may be walking the streets in rags, or it may be dying in London hospitals of lingering disease, or, which is worse than all, it may be living on year after year with all that is divine in man utterly blotted out and destroyed. The path that leads to life is strait and narrow, and few there be who find it.

THE COSTERMONGERS' FREE-AND-EASY.

EVERY class in London has its particular pleasures. The gay have their theatres—the philanthropic their Exeter Hall—the wealthy their “ancient concerts”—the costermongers what they term their sing-song.

I once penetrated into one of these dens. It was situated in a very low neighbourhood, not far from a gigantic brewery, where you could not walk a yard scarcely without coming to a public house. The costermongers are a numerous race. Walk the poor neighbourhoods on a Saturday night, and hear the cries,—“Chestnuts all ’ot a penny a score,” “Three a penny, Yarmouth bloaters,” “Penny a lot fine russets, a penny a lot,” “Now ’s your time, fine whelks, a penny a lot.” Well, the itinerant vendors of these delicacies are costermongers. Or in the daytime see the long carts drawn by donkies loaded with greens and other vegetables, all announced to the public in stentorian lungs—these men are costermongers.

Listen to those boys calling, "Ho, ho, hi, hi,—what do you think of this here? a penny a bunch, a penny a bunch. Here's your turnips!" Those boys are costermongers' lads. It is seldom they last long as men. They soon lose their voice, and how they pick up a living then no one can tell. Their talk is peculiar. Mr. Mayhew tells us their slang consists merely in pronouncing each word as if spelt backwards. "I say, Curly, will you do a *top* of *reeb* (pot of beer)?" one costermonger may say to another. "It's *on doog*, Whelkey, *on doog*" (no good, no good), the second may reply; "I've had a regular *troseno* (bad sort) to-day; I've been doing *dab* (bad) with my *tol* (lot)—han't made a *yennep* (penny), s'elp me—." "Why, I've cleared a *flatchenorc* (half a crown) a' ready." Master Whelkey will answer perhaps, "But *kool* the *esilop* (look at the police), *kool him* (look at him). Curly: *Nommus* (be off), I am going *to do the tightner*" (have my dinner). Would you know more of them, come with me.

Just look at the people in this public-house. A more drunken, dissipated, wretched lot you never saw. There are one or two little tables in front of the bar and benches, and on these

benches are the most wretched men and women possible to imagine. They are drinking gin and smoking, and all have the appearance of confirmed sots. They are shoemakers in the neighbourhood, and these women with them are their wives. "Lor' bless you, sir," exclaims the landlord, "they spend all they has in drink. They live on a penny roll and a ha'porth of sprats or mussels, and they never buy any clothes, except once in three or four years, and then they get some second-hand rubbish." And here, when they are not at work, they sit spending their money. Are there none to save them?—none to come here and pluck these brands from the burning? I know they are short-lived; I see in their pale, haggard, blotched, and bloated faces premature death. The first touch of illness will carry them off as rotten leaves fall in November; but ere this be the case, can you not reveal to them one glimpse of a truer and diviner life? But come upstairs into this concert-room, where about a hundred costermongers and shoemakers are listening to the charms of song. Talk about the refining influence of music! it is not here you will find such to be the case. The men and women and lads sitting round these shabby-

looking tables have come here to drink, for that is their idea of enjoyment ; and whilst we would not grudge them one particle of mirth, we cannot but regret that their standard of enjoyment should be so low. The landlord is in the chair, and a professional man presides at the piano. As to the songs, they are partly professional and partly by volunteers. I cannot say much for their character. The costermongers have not very strict notions of *meum* and *tuum* ; they are not remarkable for keeping all the commandments ; their reverence for the conventional ideas of decency and propriety is not very profound ; their notions are not peculiarly polished or refined, nor is the language in which they are clothed, nor the mode in which they are uttered, such as would be recognised in Belgravia. Dickens makes Mrs. General in " Little Dorrit " remark, " Society never forms opinions, and is never demonstrative." Well, the costermongers are the reverse of all this, and as the pots of heavy and the quarterns of juniper are freely quaffed, and the world and its cares are forgotten, and the company becomes hourly more noisy and hilarious, you will perceive the truth of my remarks. Anybody sings who likes ; sometimes a

man, sometimes a female, volunteers a performance, and I am sorry to say it is not the girls who sing the most delicate songs. The burdens of these songs are what you might expect. In one you were recommended not to go courting in the kitchen when the master was at home, but, instead, to choose the "airey." One song, with a chorus, was devoted to the deeds of "those handsome men, the French Grenadiers." Another recommended beer as a remedy for low spirits; and thus the harmony of the evening is continued till twelve, when the landlord closes his establishment, to the great grief of the few who have any money left, who would only be too happy to keep it up all night. Let me say a word about costermonger literature. I see Mr. Manby Smith calculates its pecuniary value at twelve thousand a year. It is wretched in every way—in composition, in printing, in cuts, and paper. These street ballads—we are all familiar with them—are sold by a class of men called patterers, and are written so as to bear on the events of the day. Thus, at the last Lord Mayor's day we had a song sung in the streets, of which the following is a specimen :—

“ Away they go, the high and low,
 Such glorious sights was never seen,
 But still the London Lord Mayor's show
 Is not as it has former been,
 When old Dick Whittington was mayor,
 And our forefathers had to go ;
 They had not got no Peelers there,
 To guard great London's Lord Mayor's shows.”

And we are told in another verse that—

“ They will talk of Russia, France, and that,
 And mention how the money goes ;
 Each man will eat a pect of sprats,
 That 's the fashion at the Lord Mayor's show.”

Some of these songs are indecent ; almost all of them have a morbid sympathy with criminals. Thus Redpath in the following lines is almost made a martyr to his benevolence and Christian life.

“ Alas ! I am convicted, there 's no one to blame—
 I suppose you all know Leopold Redpath is my name ;
 I have one consolation, perhaps I 've more,
 All the days of my life *I ne'er injured the poor.*

“ I procured for the widow and orphan their bread,
 The naked I clothed, and the hungry I fed ;
 But still I am sentenced, you must understand,
 Because I had broken the laws of the land.

“ A last fond adieu to my heart-broken wife—
 Leopold Redpath, your husband, 's transported for life ;
 Providence will protect you, love, do not deplore,
Since your husband never hurted or injured the poor.

* * * * *

"In London and Weybridge *I in splendour did dwell,*
By the rich and the poor was respected right well ;
 But now I 'm going,—oh ! where shall I say—
 A convict from England, oh ! far, far away.

* * * * *

"I might have lived happy with my virtuous wife,
 Kept away from temptation, from tumult and strife,
 I 'd enough to support me in happiness to live,
But I wanted something more poor people for to give."

As another illustration, I quote a song at one time much admired, and sung, as the phrase is, with great applause. It is headed, "The Sorrowful Lamentation and Last Farewell of J. B. Rush, who is ordered for execution on Saturday next, at Norwich Castle." After some hideous woodcut engravings of Rush and his victims, we get the following :—

"This vain world I soon shall leave :
 Dear friends in sorrow do not grieve ;
 Mourn not my end, though 't is severe,
 For death awaits the murderer.

"Now in a dismal cell I lie,
 For murder I 'm condemn'd to die ;
 Some may pity when they read,—
 Oppression drove me to the deed.

"My friends and home to me were dear ;
 The trees and flowers that blossom'd near,
 The sweet loved spot where youth began
 Is dear to every Englishman.

- " I once was happy, that is past, —
 Distress and crosses came at last;
 False friendship smiled on wealth and me,
 But shunn'd me in adversity.
- " The scaffold is awaiting me,
 For, Jermy, I have murdered thee;
 Thy hope and joy, thy son, I slew,
 Thy wife and servant wounded too.
- " I think I hear the world to say,
 Oh, Rush, why didst thou Jermy slay?
 His dear-loved son why didst thou kill,
 For he had done to thee no ill?
- " If Jermy had but kindness shown,
 And not have trod misfortune down,
 I ne'er had fired the fatal ball
 That caused his son and him to fall.
- " My cause I did defend alone,
 For learned counsel I had none;
 I pleaded hard, and questions gave,
 In hopes my wretched life to save.
- " The witness to confound did try,
 But God ordain'd that I should die.
 Eliza Chestney, she was there, —
 I'm sorry I have injured her.
- " Oh! Emily Sandford, was it due
 That I should meet my death through you?
 If you had wish'd me well, indeed,
 How could you thus against me plead?
- " I've used thee kind, though not my wife;
 Your evidence has cost my life;
 A child by me you have had born,
 Though hard against me you have sworn.

“ The scaffold is, alas, my doom,
I soon shall wither in the tomb ;
God pardon me ! no mercy 's here
For Rush, the wretched murderer.”

The reader will see from these specimens how alien the costermonger race is in sympathy and life from the respectable and the well-to-do. Their songs are not ours, nor their aims nor conventional observances. What wonder is it that they leave their wretched cellars all dirt and darkness, and crowd round the public-house ; or that at the costermongers' house of call—in the midst of an atmosphere of gin and tobacco-smoke, and under the influence of songs of very questionable merit—the poor lads receive the education which is to stamp their character and to teach them to grow up Ishmaelites, with their hands against every one, and every one's hand against them. Society will not educate its poor ; wonder not then that they educate themselves, and that after a fashion not very desirable in the eyes of the friends of morality, of order, and of law.

THE POLICE-COURT

Is an attractive lounge to the seedy, the disreputable, the unwashed. Evidently it is a grand and refreshing and popular sight to see justice doled out in small parcels—to see the righteous flourish, and the wicked put to shame. I fear, however, it is a feeling of a more personal nature that is the chief attraction after all. Jones goes to see what a mess Davis gets into; Smithes to see if Scroggins keeps “mum” like a brick; the many, to retail a little scandal at the expense of their neighbours,—if at the expense of a friend, of course so much the better. A little before ten a crowd is ranged round the police-office, waiting to see the prisoners, who have been locked up all night, marched into the court, which generally commences its operations at ten. The court itself offers very little accommodation to the most thinking public. At one end of the room is the presiding magistrate; below him is the clerk; on the right of the magistrate is the

box for complainant and witnesses. Opposite him is the dock in which the defendant is placed; behind some boards, over which only tall people can see, is the public; and on the magistrate's right are the reporters—or, rather, the penny-a-liners—who write on “flimsey,” and leave “copy” on spec. at all the daily paper offices. Let me say a word about these exceedingly seedy-looking individuals connected with the fourth estate. That they are not better dressed is, I take it, their own fault, and arises from that daring defiance of conventionalism which is so great a characteristic of the lower orders of gentlemen connected with the press. Let me say, *en passant*, the public owe these men much. It is they who labour with a perseverance worthy of a better cause, and that deserves to be successful, to describe the cases heard in the police-courts in the most racy and tempting terms. In their peculiar phraseology, every bachelor who gets into a scrape is a gay Lothario, and every young woman that appeals to justice is lady-like in manners, and interesting in appearance. The poor wretch that crawls along the street, all rouged and decked out in finery not her own, is “a dashing Cyprian.” Every Irishman is

described as “a native of the Green Isle ;” every man in a red coat, “a brave son of Mars ;” every sailor, “a jolly tar ;” and a man with a little hair on his chin, or under it, is invariably “bearded like the pard ;” and if anything causing a smile occurs,—and sometimes on the gravest occasions justice will even grin,—the court is—so they always put it—convulsed with laughter. Knights of the pen, a police-case loving-to-read public should be grateful to you ! By the side of the reporters often sit some three or four of those mischief-makers, pettifogging attorneys ; men who, in their own opinion, only require a clear stage and no favour, and the mere formality of a call to the bar, to rival, if not surpass, the fame of a Scarlett, or a Brougham, or a Lyndhurst, or an Erskine, or even of a Coke himself ; and truly if to bully, to suppress what is true, and insinuate what is false—if to gloss over the injustice done by a client, and to proclaim aloud that of the opposite party—if to speak in an emphatic manner and at a most unmerciful length—if to browbeat witnesses—mislead the court, and astonish the weak nerves of their hearers, constitute a fitness for legal greatness, these gentlemen

have only to enter their names at any of the Inns of Court, and eat the requisite number of dinners, to win at once undying reputation. At the dock appears the trembling culprit, guarded sedulously by the police, who quietly assume his or her guilt, and do all they can in endeavouring to make out a case,—occasionally going so far in their zeal as to state things not exactly true, the *esprit de corps* of course leading them to aid each other whenever they have a chance.

In a low neighbourhood the principal cases heard are those arising from intoxication. On this particular morning we will suppose the court opens with what is very common, an assault case between two Irish families who were hereditary foes, and who, emigrating, or rather, like Eneas, “driven by fate,” from the mother country at the same time, locate, unfortunately for themselves, in the same neighbourhood,—and who, in accordance with the well-known remark of Horace, continue in St. Giles’s the amicable quarrels of Tipperary, to the amusement of a congenial neighbourhood, which likes a good fight rather than not, but to the intense terror and annoyance of all such of her Majesty’s lieges as

are well disposed. As generally happens, the case, after a considerable amount of hard swearing on both sides, is dismissed, leaving to each party the inestimable privilege of paying costs. This case creates great interest; complainants and defendants are well-known performers, and the mob comes to see them as people go to see Wright at the Adelphi. When it terminates, the Guelphs and Ghibelines leave the court to discuss the oft-told tale in the nearest public-house. The remaining cases are those of sailors and navvies, charged with being drunk and disorderly, of robberies committed by prostitutes when their victims were stupified by beer, and of ragged urchins with precocious developments, the head and front of whose offending was that they "heaved" stones, or that they declined to "move on" when particularly requested to do so by the police. Poor little outcasts, they are better off in jail than on the streets; and they know it, and own to an astonishing number of convictions, and gladly look forward to the time when they shall be able to achieve greater enormities and manlier offences against law. These cases are soon disposed of; in the majority the magistrate hears the complaint, and simply tells

the little urchin he "may go down." But let us not leave yet. That is a publican, and he has a charge against this decent-looking woman,—she is not a drunkard ;—let us listen.

"Call Phil. Bird," says the superintendent.

As Phil. Bird is in court, there is no need to call him, but he is called in stentorian tones nevertheless. Policemen, like other men, love to hear the sound of their own voices. Phil. immediately steps into the witness-box. That he is a favourite with the beer-drinking public around is clear as soon as he kisses the Bible, and promises—a promise lightly made, and lightly broken—to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, "So help me God."

"Well, Bird," says the magistrate, "will you state your complaint?"

"Certainly, your honour," is the reply. "I was in my shop on Saturday, when that woman (pointing to the trembling female in the dock) came in kicking up a row, and asking for her husband ; well, she spoke to her husband, and wanted to get him away, but her husband did not choose to go ; and as she would not leave quietly, I was obliged to go and speak to her,

upon which she turned round, abusing me, saying I had robbed her of her husband, that I had got his money, and kept making a great many remarks which I was not going to submit to, especially as she had got quite a crowd of people together, and it was interfering with my business; so I called in policeman Brown, and gave her in charge."

Policeman Brown corroborates the testimony. He has yet to win his spurs, and is glad of an opportunity of distinguishing himself; besides, he has drunk too much of Phil. Bird's fine sparkling ales to refuse to do him a little friendly turn when he has a chance.

"Mr. Bird's house is a well-conducted house, I believe, Mr. Superintendent?" says the magistrate, more from habit than with any view of eliciting information.

"Good, your worship," is the answer,—“impossible to be better.” The superintendent, perhaps, has received a small cask of Devonshire cyder, as a mark of private friendship and personal esteem, from the complainant, and this might, though I would fain hope not—but flesh is grass, and a superintendent of police is but flesh after all—have influenced the nature of

his reply. This is the more probable, as one bystander whispers to another, that he believes Phil. Bird's is the worst house in the street, a remark which seems to excite the cordial approbation of the party to whom it is addressed—a remark also which the superintendent hears, and which leads him to cry “silence” in his loudest voice and sternest manner. The whisperer is cowed at once.

Phil. Bird looks gratefully at the superintendent; the latter is grateful in O'Connell's sense, and has a lively sense of favours to come.

“And the woman, what about her?” asks the magistrate.

“I believe generally she's very well behaved,” says policeman Brown, as if on the present occasion she had been guilty of an enormous offence.

“Do you know anything against her?”

“Not as I know of, yer worship.”

“Well,” says the magistrate, addressing the poor washerwoman, nervous and “all of a tremble,” as she afterwards confidentially informs a friend, looking as if she expected immediate sentence of death passed upon her, “what do you

say to the charge? Mr. Bird says you went and created a disturbance in his shop; now you had no business to do that, you know."

"I know I had n't, sir," said the poor woman; but here she bursts into tears.

Had she been alone with the magistrate, who is a kind-hearted man, and wishes to do what is right, she would soon have found her tongue, and her warm appeal, told with natural eloquence, because told out of a full heart, would soon have reached his own; but she is frightened—her energies are paralysed,—she cannot speak at all.

"Oh, Brown," says the magistrate, as if a bright thought struck him, "was the woman sober?"

"Well, I can't swear that she was drunk," said Brown, reluctantly.

This by no means helps to soothe the poor woman's nerves, but it drives her to speak in her own behalf.

"Your worship," she exclaims, "I was as sober as you are now"—she might have added, but she did not, "and a good deal more sober than policeman Brown." "I did go to Phil. Bird's, but it was to fetch my husband out, who

had been inveigled in there, and had been led into spending all the money he had, and getting drunk."

"Well, my good woman, the publican must be protected. You should not have created a disturbance. I shan't inflict a fine, but you must pay the costs. You may go down."

And so the time of the magistrate is taken up; not one case out of ten comes to anything; but the officiousness of the police is shown; the lazy and good-for-nothing part of the public have a gratuitous entertainment provided for them, and the criminal class get an initiation into the secrets of the law, which robs it of its terrors, as in such matters it is especially true familiarity breeds contempt. Most of the lads and girls—especially the latter—placed at the bar, rather seem to like the excitement, and go before the bench in their best clothes and with their best looks, as they go to the gallery of the Victoria or the Sunday tea-garden.

THE EAGLE TAVERN

Is situated in an appropriate locality in the City-road, not far from a lunatic asylum, and contiguous to a workhouse. From time immemorial the Cockneys have hastened thither to enjoy themselves. Children are taught to say—

“ Up and down the City-road,
In and out the Eagle,
That 's the way the money goes,
Pop goes the weasel.”

And the apprentice or clerk, fresh from the country, and anxious to see life, generally commences with a visit to the Grecian Saloon—Eagle Tavern. As a rule, I do not think what are termed fast men go much to theatres. To sit out a five-act tragedy and then a farce is a bore which only quiet old fogies and people of a domestic turn can endure; and even where, as in the Grecian Saloon, you have dancing, and singing, and drinking added, it is not the fast men, but the family parties, that make it pay.

There you see Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, with their respective partners and the dear pledges of their well-regulated loves. They come early, sit out *Jack Shepherd* with a resolution worthy of a better cause, listen to the singing from the Music Hall, return again to witness the closing theatrical performances, and enjoy all the old stage tricks as if they had not heard them for the last fifty years. These worthy creatures see a splendour in the Grecian Saloon which I do not. Then there are the juvenile swells. Anxious mothers in the country, fearing the contaminations of London and the ruin it has brought on other sons, lodge them in remote Islington, or Hoxton, still more remote. It is in vain they do so. The Haymarket may be far off, but the Grecian Saloon is near; and the young hopefuls come in at half-price, for sixpence, and smoke their cigars, and do their pale ale, and adopt the slang and the vices of their betters with too much ease. And then there are the unfortunates from the City-road, with painted faces, brazen looks, and gorgeous silks; mercenary in every thought and feeling, and with hearts hard as adamant. God help the lad that gets entangled with such as they!

It requires no prophet to foretell his career. Embezzlement—first with a view to replace the sum appropriated to guilty pleasures,—then embezzlement hopelessly continued because once begun,—then discovery, and punishment, and shame, and despair. Youth must have its pleasures, I know. Young blood is not torpid like that of age; and song and woman will ever be dear till time furrows the brow and silvers the hair. But why need we seek them where the air is contaminated—where the evening's amusement will not bear the morning's reflection—where, though pleasure lead the way, scattering sweet flowers, vice and shame and premature old age bring up the rear? Look at those lads; they cannot have been long emancipated from school. The erect collar, the straight hat, the long coat indicate the fact that they belong to the Young England party; and here, listening to indifferent songs, and witnessing inferior dramatic performances, and associating with the refuse of the other sex, they are learning to be men. What a manhood to look forward to! And if there be no excuse for them, there is still less for what I may call the domestic part of the audience,—the fat old women with their baskets

filled with prog, the pursy old tradesmen that drop in to smoke a pipe, and the various tribes of gents and bagsmen on their way home from the city.

Let me say a word on our domestic life. When there is so little difference between the majority of men and women, why should the line of demarcation be so severely drawn? We talk very prettily about home, sweet home, and poets sing its love and purity and charms; and a popular picture is that which the artist draws when he groups together the grey-haired grandfather and grandmother, seated by the fire, and father and mother by their side, and brave lads and graceful girls around listening, by the warm light of the lamp, to some tale of manly struggle or Christian chivalry, or lifting up together the glad voice of song. But why should your son or mine, immediately he goes out into the world and leaves the parental roof, become a stranger to all this? If the Englishman's home be his castle, why should we cast out into the ditch, to lie down and die in its mire, all who are not of the family? Think of the thousands and thousands of young men who yearly come up to town, strangers to every one,

and with no chance of getting into female society, except such as they find at such places as the Eagle. These women are not lovelier than you meet with in respectable houses—not better educated nor more correct in their principles; yet, as by natural instinct one sex seeks the society of the other, we condemn our youth to the company of such. Paterfamilias is afraid the young men will pay attention to his daughters. Perhaps the young lady-daughters fancy it to be beneath them to be civil to their father's young men. Perhaps the young men themselves believe that an honourable connexion is beyond their means, and deliberately pursue a career of vice. In all these cases, in my humble opinion, very serious blunders are involved. The life of a bachelor under the circumstances I here allude to is quite as costly as that of a married man, without the stimulus to exertion which the latter has. Paterfamilias forgets that the young man he fears may be the suitor for his daughter's hand, though he is poor to-day, may be comparatively rich to-morrow; and the young ladies should remember that it is rather too much to expect that a young man just entering upon life will be able to launch out in the same style as those who for thirty or

forty years have been pursuing a successful commercial career. It is our false pride that eats us up,—that makes us sneer at love in a cottage,—that turns our women into cross old maids, and our men into gay Lotharios, very disreputable and, to a certain extent, deliriously gay. I admit that we have much more outside respectability, but is society the better? Have we more true happiness? If Wordsworth is correct, “plain living and high thinking” go together. But our aim is high living, and I fear the thinking is very, very plain in consequence. We nurse up in our midst, and reverently worship—and denounce as worse than an infidel every one who utters the truth respecting it—an aristocracy the richest and most luxurious in the world,—an aristocracy which would long ere this have become intellectually effete, did it not recruit its ranks from successful adventurers in the shape of lawyers; and the commercial classes vying with this aristocracy in outward show, the effects are manifest all over the land, in the general attempts to live beyond one’s means, and to get into a circle supposed to be superior to that in which originally we moved. In Germany they manage better; the noble and the trading classes never

have a rivalry, the gulf is impassable, and hence the home life is less pretentious and happier than ours. In England "the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." What we want is a return to the plain living and high thinking of an age gone by; less show and more reality; the destruction of the wall of partition, either of poverty or of false pride, and the widening and enhancing the charms of the domestic circle. If now and then the result is a marriage not very intelligible on pecuniary principles, let us consider even that as a lesser evil than that resulting from the companionship, on the part of our youths, with the women who infest such places as the Eagle, and without which it is clear such places could not pay.

I will call evidence as to the character of the amusements at the Eagle Tavern. In the parliamentary report on public-houses, I find Mr. Balfour is examined respecting it. He says, "The most detrimental place of which I know, as far as women are concerned, is the Eagle Tavern in the City-road. There are gardens, and statues round the gardens, and everything to attract. There is a large theatre, and

there are theatrical representations during the week. I have seen women there whom I have recognized next day as common street-walkers. The gardens are open, with alcoves and boxes on each side, and lads and young persons are taken in there and plied with drink. The house is opened on Sunday evening, but on Sunday evening there is no dramatic representation nor music. I have seen gentlemen come out drunk." On a Sunday night when Mr. Balfour visited the place, he said, "There were various rooms. There is what is called the Chinese-room, the ball-room, and the concert-room. They were all filled with persons drinking, and I saw a great number of female servants, and females of a certain description; there is no doubt upon that subject at all." Now, Mr. Conquest, the present proprietor, must have read all this evidence, yet I do not see that he has taken any steps to reform the evil complained of. It pays, I suppose, and that is enough. Much money has been made by it. The late proprietor retired a wealthy man. The present proprietor, we presume, trusts to do the same, and if the establishment panders to vice, if women date their ruin to Sunday evenings there, if mothers see their

sons robbed of all that would make them decent men owing to their visits there, what's the odds? cries the dram-seller, who, like another Cain, asks if he be his brother's keeper.

The regular attendants see this not. "It's a beautiful place," says Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Robinson, "a'nt it, my dear?" as they sit eating questionable sausage rolls, and indulging in bottled beer. They see the pictures in the balcony, and think the gas jets quite miraculous, and admire the weak fountains and ambitious grottoes—and they laugh even at the comic singer, a feat I cannot achieve anyhow. Evidently the Eagle Tavern audience is of the same genus as an Adelphi audience, a people easily moved to laughter, and much given to taking their meals with them,—a people not prone to look before or after,—who would be drowned rather than get up and walk into the Ark, and who see no chance of their own house being burnt down in the fact that their neighbour's house is in flames. I don't believe naturally men or women are these dull clods, but custom makes them such, and they see no danger, nor perhaps is there where they are concerned. If there be no inner

light, you cannot quench it ; if the soul be dead, you need not wait for its trembling aspirations. Once within the vortex, it is in vain we warn : to the coming race, not to the race that has come, must we make our appeal.

THE SOUTHWARK MUSIC HALL.

WHOEVER it was who said the English were not a musical people seems to have made a most extraordinary blunder. Where on the face of the earth is there such practising on pianos, such tribes of itinerant minstrels, such hordes of wandering brass bands, such legions of barrel-organ grinders, as in London? Towards the latter part of the seventeenth century, according to Sir John Hawkins, such does not seem to have been the case. The nobility had, of course, private concerts of paid performers, as, to a certain extent, they had probably always been accustomed to have them. For a class lower in position we find a kind of public concerts gradually growing into use, of which the chief manager was Mr. John Banister; but as to the people generally, it seems the musical portion of them was satisfied with entertainments given in various public-houses and by performers hired by the landlords. "Here," says Sir

John, "there was no variety of parts, no mixture of different instruments; half a dozen of fiddlers would scrape 'Sellenger's (or St. Leger's) Round,' or 'John, come kiss me,' or 'Old Simon, the King,' with divisions, till themselves and their audience were tired. After which, as many players on the hautboy would, in the most harsh and discordant tones, grate forth 'Green Sleeves,' 'Yellow Stockings,' 'Gillian of Croydon,' or some such common dance tune, and the people thought it fair music." But a great reformation was at hand, and, like most reformations, the impulse came from the lower, not the upper walks of life. At this time there perambulated daily London streets a vender of small coal—a performer in music—a lover of learning, and a companion of gentlemen, though the diamonds in which he dealt were black ones. A remarkable circle that musical small-coal man drew around him at his house in Clerkenwell, as he opened his music-books and tuned his violin, and the world still honours him as Thomas Britton, the founder of cheap concerts.

But unfortunately the cheap concerts, with one rare exception,—the Monday evening concerts at St. Martin's Hall, the promoters of

which are, indeed, public benefactors, and deserve hearty patronage and praise,—have been laid hold of by the publicans and become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. As an illustration, I refer to Southwark Hall, one of the largest musical and drinking halls in London. Whenever I have been there it was crowded, and there was certainly a great deal more drinking going on than there was appreciation of the performances. One music hall is so much like another, and the entertainments at each are so much alike—the performers being often the same—that the reader who remembers my description of the Canterbury Hall will not need that I should go over the same ground again. The Southwark Music Hall, of course, stands in a low neighbourhood; to get to it you have to plunge down dark, cheerless, dreary streets, where there seems little business going on except at the public-house at the corner, and where the general population, I should imagine, was in very reduced circumstances. Be this as it may, the money seems spent freely enough at the Music Hall. Possibly the latter may be the cause of the general poverty-stricken appearance of the neighbourhood, and it may be a kind of wen eating up the

wealth of the district. The charge for admission is small, threepence downstairs and sixpence up; but this, unfortunately, does not cover the expense of the evening. The performances commence at seven and terminate at midnight, and are not confined to singing alone, the proprietor being but too ready to get hold of any novelty, and the public to run after it. Yet at all these places there is a tedious sameness; you hear the same songs sung by the same performers year after year. We English are not an inventive people; in six months of fast life you are used up, and swear with Solomon there is nothing new under the sun. How is it, then, that such places as the Southwark Music Hall are so patronised? Simply because people must have a little amusement, and take that which suits them best; and as the arrangements of our houses and our manners and customs forbid home amusements, people have no alternative. You can drink or lounge about, or listen to the singing, or smoke or talk, or not, just as you please. People go to the Music Hall to drink, and the more you drink the more you can drink. You treat your friends of course, then you treat the young girls hanging about. Then,

of course, if you are young and foolish—and at such places as the Southwark Music Hall the young and foolish abound—you must have a bit of a spree after the concert is over ; and this may and does often result in a night at the station-house, and a visit to the magistrate the next day. The singing and performances are good enough for the money. The performers do their best, and I confess it is a pleasant sight to me, that of a handsome room well filled with men and women apparently comfortable and pleased. It is only when I come to look beneath the surface that other thoughts arise. When I see this assembly, these students from Guy's, these city clerks, these respectable mechanics, with their sweethearts and wives, these men about town and unfortunates, all of them here acquiring habits in all cases unnecessary, in many fraught with destruction to body and soul alike, can I recommend youth to visit there ? Rather ought I not to do all in my power to dissuade them from anything of the kind ? By all means have pleasure, by all means listen to the voice of song, by all means cheer your hearts with music ; but fly the bowl with its fascination, for there is a sting in the mirth that is born of wine. Let

the people have cheap concerts and amusements by all means ; the real objection to the concerts and amusements of such places as the Southwark Music Hall is that they are not cheap, in spite of a small entrance fee, but very much the reverse.

THE LUNATIC ASYLUM.

A FEW miles from the terminus of one of our metropolitan railways is an immense plot of buildings, looking more like a town than a single house. It is a stately pile, beautifully situated, and I doubt not many a care-worn Cockney, as he has been hurried past it by the rail, has often wished that he had a little niche in it where he could come of a night after the day's toil was over, and smell the sweet flowers and the fresh grass; yet the place is a lunatic asylum, and whilst I write there are in it fourteen hundred men and women bereft of reason, unaccountable for their actions, and shut up away from their fellows. Very often the number is much greater, and yet this does not contain all the pauper lunatics of the metropolitan county. There is another equally large on another line of railway, and there are Wandsworth, Bedlam, and others in London itself.

It would do some of the noisy poor, who waste

their time in low pot-houses talking of their rights—when all that a man has a right to is what he can get—good to look over such a place as Colney Hatch. There are pauper lunatics lodged in a palace, waited on by skilful male and female attendants—living in light and airy galleries, as clean as wax-work, with four meals a day, and with every want supplied. I am sure every Englishman must confess that our asylums and hospitals are the glory of our land. None can deny the active and practical character of the philanthropy of our days. You may depend upon it, nine-tenths of the men and women here were never so well fed, lodged, and cared for before. Their day commences at six, and terminates at eight. Such of them as can be usefully employed are, in cleaning the wards, and in various domestic duties ; but they have plenty of spare time—the women for sewing or knitting, and the men for out-door exercise or reading. In one ward I found some good books on the table, such as Boswell's Johnson, Gibbon's Life, popular works on science, and *Punch* and several magazines. The only woman I saw reading was an old one, with a Bible before her. The women are by far more trouble-

some than the men. Directly I went into one ward, a middle-aged woman advanced towards me, with one arm uplifted, exclaiming, "Here comes my husband, King John." Another female, still plainer and more elderly, seemed inclined to address to me endearments of a still tenderer character. It was clear that they retained the instincts of their sex without its clearness. Yet there were some to whom the novelty of a stranger offered no excitement—who sat huddled up by the window, with scowling eyes and dishevelled hair, flesh and blood pictures of despair. This one had led a gay life—what a termination for a votary of pleasure. That one had become what she was by drinking; this one again by the grand passion, which underlies all history, past and present—all philosophy, objective or subjective—all religion, true or false. But, hark! it is a quarter to one, and that is the dinner bell. We enter the hall, a room capable of holding seven or eight hundred persons. Some enormous Yorkshire puddings, with some excellent beef, are borne by several eager assistants (patients) on to the tables in the middle of the room; they are immediately cut up, and each portion is enough for one person's dinner. When

the tables set apart for the women are served, the door opens, and in rush the poor creatures in a manner that shows they have not lost their relish for food. On the men's side similar preparations are made, and then in they rush; and when all are seated, a blessing is asked, and dinner commences: it does not last long. As soon as the patients have cut up their pudding, the knives and forks are carefully removed—and in a very few minutes a signal is made; they all rise—thanks are returned, and the meal is over—such as have not had enough generally managing to collar a bit of pudding as they march out. This is very short work, you say, but it is quite long enough. You will hear a woman screaming now and then, short as it is, and an attempt will be sure to be made to get over to the men's side before the meal is over. You see enough to sadden you, but the worst cases you do not see—they are wisely concealed from the curious eye; it is enough to know that they are humanely tended. Why should we care to look on such? Going down a stair-case, I saw through a glass door a poor creature suffering from suicidal monomania; night and day she had to be watched, and such had been the case for years. In her sad

face there was visible to the most superficial observer

“ The settled gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore.”

Well might she wish to lay down her life, that her crazed brain had rendered insupportable.

It is a sad sight that of an assembly of insane men and women. At the asylum to which I refer they are very humane people, and very successful in their treatment of the distressing cases constantly occurring, and twice a year—at Christmas and Midsummer—they give an entertainment, at which the better-behaved lunatics attend, and seemingly enjoy themselves very much. I was recently at one, and when I arrived, found that a field adjoining the asylum had been set apart for the purpose. There were about five hundred lunatics, male and female, present, and besides there were several gentlemen and ladies present, spectators like myself. It was a lovely afternoon, and there was music and dancing, and playing cricket, and battledore and shuttlecock, and all the various enjoyments of out-door life; but in all these matters I found the attendants appeared to take the initiative; still the poor creatures seemed to

enjoy themselves much, and were happy in their way. Yet the pleasure-seeker will not go to such a spectacle again. I do not say the vulgar idea of the maniac was realized ; on the contrary, the poor creatures seemed decent and very well behaved—but there was a pitiable want of fine physical development, there were in abundance crooked forms and stunted figures. You do not like to see what a poor thing is man when his reason is dethroned. Of course the refractory patients we do not see on such occasions, but, looking up at a window, I saw one woman's face—as she viewed the scene in which she might not participate—so wild in its anger and hopeless in its despair, that that face haunts me yet. It set me thinking how a woman could get into that state. Perhaps her father and mother, ignorant of physiological laws, had married, and she had been the result ; or the ignorance of her friends, or her own ignorance—or the competition of modern life—or the wrongdoing of others—had precipitated a catastrophe which otherwise might never have occurred, and thus society pays indirectly for its ignorance far more than it would have to do for a genuine useful education. Think of what desolated homes

these poor creatures form a portion. Remember what a fearful cost it is to the respectable hard-working amongst us, who can barely manage to make two ends meet, to have to rear such palatial residences for our pauper lunatics. The asylum of which I write in its erection cost the county an enormous sum—in its maintenance it does ditto—and I hear it is now in an insecure state, firm as it looks, and that the county of Middlesex will have to spend upon it some tens of thousands of pounds more.

I once visited this place in the winter-time; a large hall was lighted up, and there were some very pretty dissolving views exhibited, and there was dancing and music and eating and drinking going on. The room was covered with laurels and flowers and banners, and, of course, there were many ladies and gentlemen present, and the place had a cheerful air; and all confessed it was a good thing to give the poor creatures a little innocent amusement. But only think of dancing with lunatics—and such ugly ones too—and being held by the button-hole by some wild-eyed ancient mariner. Coleridge might have come here and written :

“ He held him with his glistening eye,
The wedding guest stood still,
And listen'd like a child—
The mariner has his will.”

But if the wedding guest stays here long, he would not be in a fit state for the wedding—and still less would he be so if he goes over the building. What a contrast the present treatment of lunatics is to that which prevailed till lately ! The exposure of the wretched system pursued at Bethlem, which took place in 1814, in consequence of the investigation of a parliamentary committee, appears to have been productive of great good. The visitors thus describe one of the women's galleries :—“ One of the side-rooms contained about ten patients, each chained by one arm or leg to the wall, the chain allowing them merely to stand up by the bench or form fixed to the wall, or sit down again. The nakedness of each patient was covered by a blanket gown only. The blanket gown is a blanket formed something like a dressing gown, with nothing to fasten it in parts. The feet even were naked.” Many women were locked up in cells, naked and chained, on straw, with only one blanket for a covering ; and the win-

dows being unglazed, the light in winter was shut out for the sake of warmth. In the men's rooms, their nakedness and their mode of confinement, continues the report from which we have already quoted, gave this room the appearance of a dog-kennel. At this period the committee for months together made no inspection of the inmates. The house surgeon was in an insane state himself, and still oftener drunk ; and the keepers were often in the latter state ; yet at this very time the governors spent £600 in opposing a bill for regulating mad-houses, and I dare say they cried out lustily, No centralisation !—no interference with vested interests ! as enlightened Englishmen and parochial dignitaries are wont to do in our days.

Could we not do without lunatic asylums, if society gave up its drinking customs ? Not exactly ; but their number might be very much decreased. Two-thirds of our lunatics become so through drink. “ They are very bad at first, sir,” said one of my informants to me, “ but after a little while they get quieter, and perhaps they are cured in two or three months.” And yet I find all these lunatics are supplied with beer. “ They has two half-pints a day, sir, and

when they work they gets two half-pints more, and very good beer it is, sir," continued my informant, "as strong as any man need drink." Now is not this preposterous? Men who drink till they become lunatics should be taught to do without it; but they are allowed their beer even in the asylum, and when they go out they begin drinking again, and of course relapse. Thus we keep feeding our lunatic asylums, at the very time we profess to cure lunatics. I admit these places are in many respects well managed—that the buildings are commodious—that the attention is good—that the governors are humane, and the medical officers vigilant; but which is the truer humanity, to take care of the man when in a lunatic asylum, or to keep him out of it altogether?

THE END.

THE LONDON PULPIT.

BY

JAMES EWING RITCHIE.

CONTAINING SKETCHES OF THE REV. DR. DALE—MAURICE—MELVILLE—MONTGOMERY—VILLIERS—BINNEY—DR. CAMPBELL—DR. LEIFCHILD—LYNCH—MARTIN—MIALI—BROCK—HAWARD HINTON—BAPTIST NOEL—DR. CUMMING—DR. JAMES HAMILTON—W. FORSTER—H. IERSON—JOHANNES RONGE, &c. &c. &c.

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